ANTITHETIC ANGLICANS: SWIFT AND BISHOP BURNET

by

Emily H. Patterson

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University
of Utah in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English

University of Utah
June 9, 1967

This Dissertation for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

by
Emily H. Patterson

has been approved
April 1967

Milton Voigt
Chairman, Supervisory Committee

Clarice Short
Reader, Supervisory Committee

Robert C. Steensma
Reader, Supervisory Committee

L. H. Adamson
Head, Major Department

Sterling M. McMurrin
Dean, Graduate School

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ABSTRACT		iv
INTRODUCTION:	Statement of my general intentions	1
CHAPTER I:	The Background of Swift's Beliefs	8
CHAPTER II:	The Background of Burnet's Beliefs	25
CHAPTER III:	The Marginalia as a Reflection of Swift's and Burnet's Religious and Political Differences	54
CHAPTER IV:	The Marginalia as a Reflection of Swift's and Burnet's Differences in Literary Temperament and Historical Method	105
CHAPTER V:	The Marginalia as Rhetoric	144
BIBLIOGRAPHY		164
VITA		167

ABSTRACT

Jonathan Swift never intended that others read his marginal notes in Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time. For that reason scholars value them, since Swift wrote without fear of censure or retribution. The comments are neither idle nor unseasoned, for in the latter half of the decade of the 1730's when he read and annotated Burnet's work, Swift was rounding out a half-century career as Churchman, political journalist, and literary artist.

A study of the marginalia reveals that even when Swift was not consciously writing literature, he drew upon his literary skill and overflowing wit. The marginalia are similar in method and effect to his great satiric masterpieces, A Tale of a Tub, the Bickerstaff pamphlets, Gulliver's Travels, the Drapier's Letters, and A Modest Proposal. In the marginalia as in the more deliberate works, Swift used irony, the satiric artist's cherished device, to strip away the outer illusions and reveal the underlying truth. Swift found the wise, moral Anglican bishop a false image. In his nearly three hundred separate marginal comments on Burnet's digressive but never boring recital of a century of Stuart rule, Swift uncovered a cleric-historian different from the Burnet of tradition. Burnet as Swift saw him is biased, egotistical, unsound in historical judgment,

and indifferent to religion and morality.

A greater value of the marginalia is their insight into Swift's own historical position and prejudice. Swift was a High Church Tory who never laid aside his Anglo-Irish Whig convictions: he abhorred Dissent and disavowed the Papacy and the claims of the Stuart Pretender. Yet when his Whiggism would have compromised his Anglicanism to yield to Dissent, he changed to Tory and dedicated himself to ending Queen Anne's war with France, opposing the Whigs who would have prolonged it. Even as official apologist for the queen's Tory ministry, Swift continued to think of himself as neither Whig nor Tory, but a moderate of the Church party, convinced that the Tories he represented were for the Established Church, the Revolutionary Settlement, and the Hanoverian succession.

Gilbert Burnet, ordained into the ministry of the early Restoration Church of Scotland, upheld passive obedience until the Revolution of 1688, yet remained a lifelong Erastian. Although thoroughly Episcopal, he castigated Charles II's reinstatement of Episcopacy and persecution of Non-Conformity in Scotland. To unite the divided Kirk, Burnet preached a program of comprehension that would have broadened the base of Episcopacy so that the Presbyterians might have returned to the Established Church. When the king cut short Burnet's Scottish career, Burnet went to London, joined the court opposition, and became the spokesman for the Latitudinarian moderates or Low Churchmen in the Whig party.

Burnet's middle-of-the-road religion and politics smoothed the way for the bloodless Revolution of 1688, the peaceable accession of William and Mary, and the Hanoverian succession. Swift wrote his harshest marginal comments on Burnet's conciliation of Dissent, his slurs at Episcopacy, especially the High Church, his alliance with William of Orange, his Whig partisanship, and his opposition to the Tory peace negotiations. Swift wanted the Dissenters forever barred from the Anglican communion; Burnet hoped to lure them back by doctrinal and liturgical compromise. Swift detested William for his shoddy maneuvers to get the throne; Burnet saw him as God's instrument who saved Protestantism. Swift assailed the Whigs who prolonged the war to make their private fortunes; Burnet whipped the Tory peacemakers for intriguing with France to restore England to Catholicism.

Swift considered Burnet a traitor to Anglicanism, unfit to wear the cloth. Swift's unswerving High Church adherence and his revulsion for Low Church Whigs, especially after their revenge on the Tories at the queen's death, prevented his fair assessment of Burnet's religion and politics. Burnet's moderate Anglicanism was ahead of its time; not until the Broad Church movement of the nineteenth century would it find wide acceptance. Burnet's antithetic beliefs suspended Swift's historical objectivity, the attitude which Swift also found wanting in Burnet. Had

Swift possessed it, he could have credited Burnet as a chronicler of the early Restoration in Scotland, the pre-Revolution in Holland, and the reign of William and Mary, from the vantage ground of an on-the-scene observer and participant. Even more, Swift could have credited Burnet for his part in perpetuating Protestantism, by making a Dutch Calvinist palatable to the English, by preserving the Established Church and granting toleration to Dissent in the Revolutionary Settlement, and by opening the Hanoverian negotiations that insured England a line of Protestant kings.

The clash of two antithetic temperaments furnished an ideal working climate for the master English ironist, clarified his own historical position, and at the same time revealed his prejudice.

INTRODUCTION

Jonathan Swift loved history--as a student of the works of others and as a commentator upon them, as a historian in his own right, and as a shaper of the history of his own time. His major works are grounded in a thorough knowledge of history from ancient times to his own day: A Tale of a Tub reflects a comic interest in Church history; the Battle of the Books delves into the period of the ancients; Gulliver's Travels is concerned with the history of Swift's own era. In his vigorous political writings, in his essays for the Tatler, in his powerful pamphlets for the Tory administration of Harley and St. John, in his Journal to Stella that records the activities of this Tory regime, and in his later writings, such as the Drapier's Letters, that speak out for the relief of the oppressed Irish, Swift wielded his pen as a weapon, often with effectiveness. For Swift was a reformer who employed his literary talents to mold the opinion and to shape the action that makes history. Swift was devoted to reason and sense, distrusting all that was illusory, fanatical, or speculative. Although he might write contemptuously, or with savage anger, or in fun, his object was always the good of mankind.

As a young man in the last years of the seventeenth century, serving as a secretary in the household of Sir William Temple, Swift planned to write a history of England that he possibly intended to be a continuation of Temple's history, which had ended with William I. The work was never finished; all that remains is a dedication, an abstract, and a curious fragment that begins with the reign of William II and breaks off in the reign of Henry II. Scholars find that the material was largely derived from Swift's wide reading of Latin texts and the English chronicle writers.[1] His chief historical work that qualifies him as a historian in his own right is his History of the Four Last Years of the Queen, an account of the events leading up to the Treaty of Utrecht in Queen Anne's reign, when Swift was actively engaged in the affairs of the Tory government.

Between 1734 and 1736 Swift revised this history for the last time. Then, or later, he read and made his marginal notes in Bishop Gilbert Burnet's History of His Own Time, of which the second and final volume appeared in 1734. Swift made his last annotations in Burnet's work in 1739. Of the nearly one hundred historical works in Swift's personal library, his copies of Herodotus, Baronius, and Clarendon were also carefully annotated in his own hand, as well as lesser known historical works by Robert Parsons, Thomas Herbert, Jean Bodin, Lord Cherbury, Joseph Addison, Peter Heylin, John Browne, John Macky, and William Howells.[2] Surely Swift did not intend his marginal jottings to be read by others. For that very reason they are valuable to the student interested in Swift's thought and temperament. The unabashed frankness of Swift's comments and their unmistakable relevance and application by their juxtaposition to the topic discussed render them significant.

---

[1] Irvin Ehrenpreis, "Swift's History of England," Journal of English and Germanic Philology, LI (April 1952), 177-185; Swift, The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift, ed. Herbert Davis (Oxford, 1939-[____]), V, ix-x, 3-78 passim. (Hereafter I shall refer to this edition of Swift's prose as "Prose Writings," followed by the appropriate volume number and page.)

[2] Prose Writings, V, ix-x, xxx-xl.

Swift's comments on Burnet's History are not confined solely to the informal notes he made in his own copy of the work. Some time after the first volume of Burnet's posthumously published work appeared in 1724, Swift wrote his Short Remarks on Bishop Burnet's History, in which he condemned Burnet as a historian for his objectionable style, his false statements, his unreliable sources, his vanity, his fanatical hatred of Catholicism, and his partiality to Presbyterians and other Dissenters. Swift pointed out that Burnet devoted two-thirds of the work to the affairs of Scotland and relegated England's concerns to a minor role, treating them as digressions from the more important topic. Further, Swift considered certain of Burnet's expressions uncouth and inappropriate to a dignified work.[3]

It is not surprising that Swift would clash with Burnet's opinions, for Swift was a High Church Anglican Tory, who would allow no argument about orthodox Anglican doctrine, while Burnet was a Scot, which alone would rankle Swift, who detested the Puritan zeal of the Presbyterians, who ruled Scotland and had brought Charles I to his final ruin by their alliance with him in the Second Civil War. Swift spoke of Scotland as

---

[3] Prose Writings, V, 3-78 passim.

"that beggarly nation, and their insignificant brangles and factions."[4] But Swift's dislike of Burnet had a more immediate reason than nationality: Burnet, an Anglican bishop of the Whiggish Latitudinarian or Low Church party, had incurred the enmity of all High Anglican Tories by his active support of the Latitudinarian cause during the fifty-odd years of a clerical career that began in 1661, in the second year of the Restoration, and lasted into the beginning of the reign of George I. Swift and Burnet, one High Church English Tory, the other Low Church Scottish Whig, were widely separated in both religion and politics.

In style Swift was of his age in his fondness for classical models, which he felt best exemplified the purity, precision, and plainness which he himself strived for. His own prose is admirable for its polish, restraint and correctness. Swift was a reformer in a reforming age, and the English tongue was one of his prime concerns. Just as had his fellow Neo-Classicist Defoe, Swift, too, advocated the establishment of an English Academy that might purify the language by setting a standard of correctness. Swift cited the language of the King James Version of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer as models for imitation. At another time he spoke for elegance and grace of expression and neatly exposed the trite diction of his time.[5]

Burnet's prose style was often casual, careless, and rambling. He tended toward countless repetitions of stock phrases and words that irritated

---

[4] Prose Writings, V, 184.

[5] A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue (1712), Letter to a Young Clergyman (1721), Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation (1738).

Swift's sensitive ear: *setting up for a maxim*, *laying down for a maxim*, *clapt up*, *decency*. Even worse he resorted to expressions that Swift considered vulgar: here Swift again cited *clapt up*, as well as *cut out for a court*, *a pardoning planet*, *left in the lurch*, *the mob*, *outed*, *a great beauty*, *went roundly to work*.[6]

Burnet modelled his *History* after the work of the sixteenth-century French historian De Thou, rather than after the classical models of Tacitus, Livy, or Plutarch. De Thou, or Thuanus, in writing his *Historia sui temporis* in Latin, had tried to create an unbiased, scientific model of exact research, drawn from the best sources and written in an elegant, yet animated style.[7] But Burnet's method is anecdotal, gossipy, and often reliant upon his memory of events, some of which had occurred in his early childhood.[8] Swift's appraisal of Burnet as a historian is painfully blunt: "This author is in most particulars the worst qualified for an historian that ever I met with."[9]

Despite the title of the work, *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time: From the Restoration of King Charles the Second to the Treaty of Peace at Utrecht, in the Reign of Queen Anne*, Burnet begins in the time of James I, the first Stuart, who ascended the throne at Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603, and ends, as the title indicates, in 1713, one year prior to the death of Queen Anne. Burnet died in 1715, at the age of seventy-two. A codicil to his will assigned his papers to his son, also named Gilbert, and specified that the *History* was "not to see the light within six years," but should eventually be published *verbatim* from the Bishop's final text. In 1724 Gilbert issued the first volume of his father's work, which covered the period prior to the Revolution of 1688; its contents caused so much comment that it soon became a *succes de scandale.* Ten years later, young Gilbert having died in the interval, Thomas Burnet, a second son, edited the second volume and included in it his own biography of his late father.[10]

---

[6] *Prose Writings*, V, 184.

[7] "De Thou," Jacques Auguste (Thuanus), *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th ed., Vol. XXII, 156-157.

[8] Albert C. Baugh, ed., *A Literary History of England* (New York, 1948), pp. 789-790.

[9] *Prose Writings*, V, 183.

This study will examine Swift's marginalia in Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, in an effort to clarify Swift's historical position, to analyze his prejudices, and to define his literary method, with special attention to the quality of his irony. Swift was a satirist, writing against all human folly, lack of integrity, and persistence in evil; a satirist who found his most effective satirical method in irony, a way of handling words within a literary form, rather than a form itself. So expertly did Swift use this technique, that he is the master ironist in English. The abundance and the variety of the irony in Swift's marginalia to Burnet's *History* attest to Swift's fondness for this stylistic attitude, even when he believed he was writing for no one's enlightenment other than his own and for no purpose other than the pleasure of his own self-expression.

---

[10] T. E. S. Clarke and H. C. Foxcroft, *A Life of Gilbert Burnet* (Cambridge, 1907), p. 475.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF SWIFT'S BELIEFS

It is but natural that Jonathan Swift chose to be a clergyman; both his parents were clergymen's children, and a number of clergymen appear in previous generations of his family. Besides clerical forebears, Swift also had a literary ancestor: his great grandfather and John Dryden's grandfather were brothers. Swift was of the High Church Anglican persuasion of his paternal grandfather, the Reverend Thomas Swift of Herefordshire, "the one ancestor he venerated above all,"[1] a staunch Royalist whom Cromwell had persecuted. Swift did not associate himself with his maternal grandfather, the Reverend James Ericke, a Leicester minister of Puritan sympathies, whom Laudian Anglicans may have deprived of his living.[2]

In 1660, seven years prior to Swift's birth, his father and uncles had settled in Ireland, when its unsettled social order offered Englishmen opportunities to buy land cheaply. Swift was born into a factious, class-conscious Ireland divided between conqueror and conquered. Interests clashed between the native Catholics and their English Protestant conquerors, between Anglo-Irish Dissenters and Anglo-Irish Anglicans, between the old established Anglicans and the church and state officials sent from England to rule the country, between landlord and priest, between landlord and tenant. These dissonances were the product of England's centuries-long dominance of Ireland. From the twelfth century England had planted colonists in Ireland who soon controlled vast areas as feudal overlords. Early in the seventeenth century, Scottish and English Dissenters, fleeing James I's persecutions, had settled the northern plantations of Ulster. When the Ulsterite rebellion of 1641 spread all over Ireland, Cromwell invaded the country and cruelly punished the Catholic rebels by confiscating their lands. The Catholic confiscations continued, until by 1660, when Swift's father and uncles came to Ireland, the country offered emigrant Englishmen opportunities their homeland quite denied them.

---

[1] Irvin Ehrenpreis, Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age, Vol. I: Mr. Swift and His Contemporaries (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), 4.

[2] Ehrenpreis believes that Swift's intense devotion to his Royalist Anglican paternal grandfather implies a corresponding repudiation of his Non-Conformist maternal grandfather (Ibid., 6-7).

In 1667, the year of Swift's birth, the Anglican community of Dublin where Swift was born was a tiny self-contained world that ruled the great outside world of native Catholic Irish, that, for the exception of Presbyterian Ulster, constituted the rest of Ireland. The native Irish had no civil or political rights; the English Crown sent government officials from England, ignoring the Anglo-Irishmen as well as the natives. Swift was by birth an Anglo-Irishman of the Established Church of Ireland, the Irish counterpart of the Church of England; in addition, he was of the landowner class, which held whatever power the English crown had left to that minority.

In Ireland an English Protestant was likely to be a Whig, since the Irish Catholics were Tories; yet an Englishman was not always an Anglican, for the members of the Church of Ireland constituted but a fraction of the Protestants in Ireland. The Anglicans warred with the Presbyterians of Ulster, the only serious threat to Anglican dominion, since the Catholics had neither power nor property. Swift's intolerance of Presbyterianism was more intense for his having been born in Ireland, where the animosity between Anglican and Presbyterian was fiercer than in England. The Church of Ireland was impoverished, its fabric decrepit, its morale undermined, much as was that of the state government, by having its substantial positions filled by men sent from England, a sad discouragement to the native Anglicans, and even more to one who aspired to the ministry. The Anglican landlords, who lived either in Dublin or in London, parcelled out their estates to the Irish peasants, who were forced to pay rackrents to their lords, tithes to the Established Church, and dues to their own Catholic priests.

After the Revolution of 1688, King William of England defeated a native Irish uprising, led by the deposed James II, in the Battle of the Boyne. Once more the English punished the Catholics by confiscations, until by the end of the seventeenth century not more than one-seventh of Ireland was owned by Catholics. The "Protestant Ascendancy," which lasted not only through Swift's lifetime, but until the end of the eighteenth century, was a coercive regime, backed up by England's army. The price for this insurance to Anglo-Irish supremacy was the subservience of the Irish Parliament and the subjection of all Ireland to England's laws and commercial restrictions.[3]

The young Swift, growing up and coming of age in Dublin, as a member of the Established Church and the Whig ruling class, accepted the ruin of the Irish natives, hated Catholics, but Presbyterians more, yet detested the bishops England sent to rule the Church of Ireland. He respected real property over moneyed wealth, in a land where currency depreciation constantly threatened. The sum of Swift's beliefs was conservatism, inevitable for one cast in the mold of Irish Anglicanism, Whiggery, and an obsession for real property. While Swift was studying for his bachelor's degree at Trinity College in Dublin, the Dublin Philosophical Society was founded. Swift scorned its dedication to the methods of observation, experiment, and mathematics; Swift's hostility to science and natural philosophy dates from his Trinity College days and his acquaintance with this organization.

In 1689, when James II was storming the Irish Protestant strongholds in an attempt to overthrow English rule in Ireland, Swift was one of the prudent Protestants who fled the country. By the end of that year, he had become secretary to Sir William Temple and had joined his household in Moor Park, Surrey. Here, in an atmosphere of sophisticated culture, Swift would serve for nearly a decade.

---

[3] Ehrenpreis, I, 8-20; Ricardo Quintana, The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift (Oxford, 1936, reprinted with additional bibliography, 1953), pp. 108-110, 191, 246-252.

At the Restoration Temple had returned to England from a long residence in Ireland to serve as a diplomat for Charles II. In 1668 Temple had negotiated the Triple Alliance, which joined Holland with England against France, a *tour de force* of diplomacy that Charles II had promptly wrecked by his own secret bargaining with France. After serving as ambassador to Holland, Temple had retired to his Moor Park estate, although he continued to keep up his associations with kings and statesmen. Temple's influence on Swift has always been underestimated,[4] for Swift venerated Temple above all men. Temple shaped Swift's political, philosophical, and literary tastes; Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, the major literary work of his Moor Park years, sets up Temple as a model Christian gentleman, steeped in humanistic learning, obedient to reason and to the tenets of Anglicanism, for all men to emulate.[5]

At Moor Park Swift also wrote the *Battle of the Books*, a prose mock-epic attacking pedantry that divorces scholarship from wisdom; the *Mechanical Operations of the Spirit*, which mocks pseudo-scientists and the zeal of Dissenting preachers; his first poems, mainly pseudo-Pindaric odes. Besides these original works, Swift prepared for publication three volumes of Temple's correspondence and two volumes of his memoirs. Swift interrupted his Moor Park residence to return to Ireland to be ordained a priest and serve as prebend of Kilroot for one year; at another time he went to London to present

---

[4] Ehrenpreis, I, 92.

[5] *Ibid.*, 189-190.

King William with Temple's arguments for the Triennial Bill.

Both Temple and Swift worked for peace: Temple negotiated the Anglo-Dutch alliance to stop Louis XIV's territorial aggressions; Swift served four years as ministerial propagandist for the negotiations that ended the War of the Spanish Succession. Temple taught Swift sincerity in politics and diplomacy; he taught him to consider national policy determined by the character of the executive and to eschew the devious path of secret machinations for the high road of honest good will; Temple convinced Swift that men, not circumstance, make history; Temple formed the younger man's negative philosophy of history, that denies progress and regards change as decay, a position Swift upheld in *A Tale of a Tub*, the *Battle of the Books*, and in his essays on linguistic standards and rhetorical excellence. Temple strengthened Swift's already-formed hostility to the speculative, technical inquiries of natural philosophy and science, as apart from moral philosophy, which stressed man's frailty and his obligation to a stern, humble, pursuit of duty. Both men rejected the schemes of nature, whether drawn by Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Descartes, or Hobbes. Swift considered Epicurus's and Hobbes's mechanistic schemes and Descartes' geometrical method as but reductions of man and the world to soulless machines. He rejected them for offering no actual help for man's condition and for denying spirit in the Christian sense, by separating faith from reason and setting up natural laws independent of Providence. In *A Tale of a Tub* Swift aired his hatred of the neo-Epicurean and Hobbesian philosophies; years later he would do so again in

Gulliver's Travels, when in Book III Aristotle's ghost scoffed at the new systems of nature as passing fashions that flourished briefly in every age. Swift, as did Temple, believed natural phenomena unimportant beside the study of man, and speculation into areas beyond the reach of common sense futile. Both Temple and Swift confined man's concern to the application of the universal truths revealed by reason. In addition to these attitudes, Swift acquired Temple's love of polite learning, his commitment to dillettantism in preference to specialization, as well as his literary tastes and refined prose style.[6]

Robert C. Steensma's recent study pointed to the tendency of modern scholars to ignore Temple's influence on Swift, or to state it in generalities. Steensma found that Temple had influenced Swift's political theories far more profoundly than these broad categories would suggest: their mutual distrust of the common people, of self-seeking, dishonest officials, and of the qualifications of office-seekers; their mutual fear of tyranny and standing armies, their comprehensive grasp of history, and their rejection of the social contract theory of government. Temple's influence penetrated Swift's thinking more deeply: both men believed monarchy evolved from the patriarchal system; both believed the authority of government was contingent upon the consent and continued good will of the people, that the quality of government was determined by the character of its officials, and that the preservation of government rested upon a balance of power among its elements. Steensma explored other areas in which Temple influenced Swift. He found that Temple conveyed his distrust of science to the younger man and possibly served as his model for the admirable Lord Munodi in Book III of Gulliver's Travels. Further, Swift's reflection in the Battle of the Books and A Tale of a Tub of Temple's views in the ancients-moderns controversy was "more than mere coincidence," in that Steensma discovered Swift drew his characters and his opinion of critics for both these works from Temple's writings. In one area, however, Temple's precepts influenced Swift conversely: in A Tale of a Tub Swift rejected "the wisdom of the life of sensual pleasure," the one aspect of Epicureanism which his mentor praised.[7]

---

[6] Ehrenpreis, I, 122-123, 192-193, 220-221; Quintana, Mind and Art, pp. 20, 55; Prose Writings, XI, 197-198.

Although Temple molded many of Swift's beliefs, not all of his views were cast in Temple's matrix. Temple was an Anglican who tolerated Dissent, but Swift would allow no deviation from orthodox Anglicanism. Temple had attended Cambridge, a Puritan stronghold, where his tutor, Ralph Cudworth, a liberal Neo-Platonist, may have influenced his religious opinions. Temple's later residence in Holland and his friendship with the Calvinist William of Orange had not only cooled Temple's Anglicanism, but also his interest in all religion. Swift fanatically hated Dissenters; Cromwell's Puritans had persecuted his Royalist clergyman grandfather; Swift had grown up in Ireland, where the numerical superiority of the Presbyterians had been a thorn in the flesh to the Anglicans; the Presbyterians had infuriated Swift the year he had served at Kilroot in the diocese of Connor, which lay within the boundaries of Presbyterian Ulster. Swift lashed the Dissenters in _A Tale of a Tub_, in which he equated Jack and the Aeolists with the Puritan party spirit; he further lashed the Puritan preachers in the _Mechanical Operation of the Spirit_; later Swift's pamphlets would keep the Test Act in Ireland, that barred the Dissenters from holding office.

---

[7] "The Influence of Sir William Temple on Jonathan Swift: Some Conclusions," Proceedings of Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, XLI, Part II (1964), 195-201; "Swift's Model for Lord Munodi," Notes and Queries, XII, N.S. (June 1965), 216-217.

Ricardo Quintana maintained Swift viewed Anglicanism as the life of reason, man's funded experience, and that Swift adhered to Anglicanism because it was the _via media_, lying between the extremes of Catholicism and Dissent.[8] Quintana's emphasis that Swift's religious views were with the main current of Restoration Anglicanism, and that these views were not original, but rather representative of the prevailing _Zeitgeist_ of the Enlightenment, has been refuted by Milton Voigt, who asserted Swift was not a uniformitarian, because he "ruled reason out of bounds" in love of life, in the propagation of the species, and in his acceptance of revealed religion;

---

[8] Swift associated both Dissent and Catholicism with past tyrannies of state and religion; the first had been the Puritan tyranny of the Commonwealth that spawned the even greater tyranny of Cromwell; the second had been the tyranny of the absolutist Catholic Stuart, James II, that the Revolution of 1688 had overthrown (Quintana, _Mind and Art_, pp. 73, 87; Quintana, _Swift: An Introduction_ [London, 1955], pp. 34-38).

nor, continued Voigt, did Swift hold the prevailing political beliefs of the Enlightenment, which favored democracy and universal suffrage. Voigt further noted Swift's originality in his preferring individual man to mankind, and his imagination, "prodigious by any standards." Voigt cited D. Nichol Smith's refutation of Quintana's labelling Swift's Anglicanism as the *via media*, for Smith contended that Swift's Anglican convictions were derived, not from a total satisfaction with that faith, but rather from his finding it as near to relative perfection as any church he knew.[9]

In politics both Temple and Swift were Whigs, yet each was of a type peculiar to his own national party commitment. Swift, an Irish Protestant, was perforce a Whig, for an Irish Tory invariably was a Catholic, who supported the claims of the Stuart Pretender and opposed English rule. In England Whig-Tory alignments differed; although both parties backed the Revolution of 1688, the Tories were the conservatives: the landowners, the gentry, and most High Churchmen; the Whigs were the Dissenters, the Anglicans inclined toward compromise, the middle class tradesmen, and the newly-rich business men of the city. The difference between an Irish Whig and an English Whig would discomfit Swift his entire lifetime. In a letter to Alexander Pope, written from Dublin, January 10, 1721, Swift observed:

> I ought to let you know, that the Thing we called a Whig in England is a creature altogether different from those of the same

---

[9] Milton Voigt, *Swift and the Twentieth Century* (Detroit, 1964), pp. 137-146.

> denomination here, at least it was so during the reign of Her late Majesty. Whether those on your side have changed or no, it hath not been my business to inquire. I remember my excellent friend Mr. Addison, when he first came over hither Secretary to the Earl of Wharton, then Lord Lieutenant, was extremely offended at the conduct and discourse of the Chief Managers here: He told me they were a sort of people who seemed to think, that the principles of a Whig consisted in nothing else but damning the Church, reviling the Clergy, abetting Dissenters, and speaking contemptibly of revealed Religion.[10]

In the political and religious pamphlets he wrote between 1701 and 1709, Swift defended himself as a Whig High Churchman; yet as early as 1703, Swift suffered for his Whiggishness, when that party in the English Parliament defeated the Tories' bill to prevent occasional conformity; for Swift's High Church adherence would have aligned him with the Tories, rather than with the Whigs whom he felt obligated to support. Swift's Whig affiliation frustrated him a second time, when he came to London in 1707 as the agent of the Irish bishops to secure for the Church of Ireland the remission of "the first fruits and twentieth parts," income the Church of Ireland paid to the English Crown. After some months, the Whig minister Godolphin had told Swift that this sum would be remitted on the condition that the Church of Ireland agreed to the removal of the Test Act. Swift, however, would have changed his political affiliation rather than have compromised his religion. When the "first fruits" were not forthcoming, Archbishop King of Dublin prevailed upon Swift to undertake the bishops' cause a second time.

---

[10] Swift, The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, ed. Harold Williams, Vol. II: 1714-1723 (5 vols.; Oxford, 1963-1965), 371.

For this purpose Swift went to London in September 1710, where he found conditions altered; the Whig government was on its way out; Queen Anne was fast replacing her Whig ministers to stem the popular discontent with the war in France, which the Whigs were blamed for prolonging. The recent Whig persecution of Doctor Sacheverell, a Tory minister who had criticized the Whigs from his pulpit, had sealed the party's fate. One last time Swift approached Godolphin to restate his request, but that minister rebuffed him tartly. When Robert Harley, the new chancellor of the exchequer, sought Swift out and promised him the grant for the Irish Church, Swift, disgruntled with the Whigs for having stalled the payment, as well as for prolonging the war, shifted his allegiance to Harley's new coalition party, dedicated to ending the war. Soon Swift accepted the editorship of the Examiner, an organ to defend the new ministry and its peace negotiations.

Harley was a moderate who hoped to keep the ministry above party; Swift thought of himself as of this party, neither Whig nor Tory, and he likewise pledged the Examiner to impartiality. Swift believed that the queen, the ministry, the clergy, and nine-tenths of the kingdom were moderates; he was convinced that the Whigs, led by Godolphin and Marlborough, representing the new moneyed class and the military, had prolonged the war for their own selfish interests.[11] Although Tory zealots soon took over the ministry and destroyed its non-partisanship, Swift never changed his own moderate position. In his seven months' editorship he defended the ministry's peace negotiations; when England abandoned her Dutch ally to deal directly with the French so as to secure better terms, Swift left the Examiner to assume the more difficult role of silencing the Whigs, turning public opinion against the Dutch, and winning Parliament's approval of the peace, by writing two polemics, the Conduct of the Allies and its sequel, Some Remarks on the Barrier Treaty.

---

[11] Quintana, Swift: An Introd., pp. 97-107.

During the four years Swift was the Tory ministry's apologist, he never broke with his Whig convictions, because he never considered them as contradicting the activities he was then pursuing. He truly believed that the ministry was for the Established Church and the Revolutionary Settlement; he knew nothing of the ministers' Jacobite intrigues. Quintana admits that Swift was self-deluded, but he maintains that Swift's own political principles transcended those of the Tories he served, and that his own Toryism did not proscribe his Whig beliefs:

> But to the extent that he spoke for a party which existed only in his own mind, to the extent that his political principles surpassed in clarity and nobility those embodied by the politicians whom he served, he was right. His own toryism was not denial of all that the whigs stood for, not fear of all save the past; it was faith in history, in experience, and in the moderation of average Englishmen when intelligently informed.[12]

George Orwell believed Swift was driven to "a sort of perverse Toryism by the follies of the progressive party of the moment," yet he was not a Tory in the strict sense; his aim was to secure a moderate peace treaty to save England from outright defeat.[13] Orwell named Swift a reactionary in politics, in that he preached a closed society, abominated democracy, and scorned intellectual curiosity. Quintana defended Swift from Orwell's charge by citing William Butler Yeats, who two decades earlier had anticipated Orwellian-type attacks in his insistence that Swift should never be judged in terms of the twentieth century, but rather he should be judged in the context of his own era, for, as the spokesman of a domineering society of Anglo-Irish aristocracy, Swift was a liberal, opposed to Stuart absolutism and Walpole's tyranny of government.[14]

---

[12] Quintana, Mind and Art, p. 110.

Swift's later career, as the defender of the Irish against England's colonial mercantilism, dispels any remaining beliefs that Swift was a reactionary. As the Dean of St. Patrick's, he waged war in prose pamphlets, in verse, and in the Drapier's Letters, against England's strangling Ireland's agriculture, industry, and trade. Swift preached economic self-sufficiency and the rights of Englishmen for England's Irish subjects.

Swift's championship of Ireland against England was ironical, for Swift had reluctantly accepted the Irish deanship, which he regarded almost as banishment, only after he had failed to get a preferment in the Church of England. His Irish birth and background would have alone been sufficient to have barred him from preferment in England, but, in addition, his pamphleteering had created him powerful enemies in influential circles. Both Tenison and Sharpe, Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Duchess of Somerset, and even Harley had worked against him; Queen Anne would never forgive him for the Tale of a Tub, despite its upholding Anglicanism against both Dissenters and Catholics. Yet the Drapier-Dean, without consciously intending to do so, by his espousal of the beleaguered Irish, had won their love, the very people among whom he had so reluctantly returned to live. But Swift's softening toward the Irish never extended to the Irish bishops, for whom his hatred continued unabated. Their refusal to credit him for his efforts in securing the "first fruits"--the bishops gave that honor to the Duke of Ormonde--and Archbishop King's jealous, waspish nature, that had almost ruined Swift in the months following the Tory debacle at the Queen's death, infuriated Swift. Archbishop King, rankled by what he regarded as Swift's defection to the Tories, had revengefully seized Swift's correspondence in an effort to convict him of treason. Swift's hatred of Irish bishops may have waxed even hotter after the Bishop of Meath's rumor of Hester Johnson's illegitimacy and her marriage to Swift.[15] Even if Swift could have dismissed all these grievances, he could have detested Irish bishops for no other reason than that their ranks were closed to an Irish Anglican.

---

[13] George Orwell, "Politics vs. Literature: an Examination of 'Gulliver's Travels,'" Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays (New York, 1945), p. 55.

[14] Quintana, Swift: An Introd., pp. 28-30.

---

[15] Quintana, Mind and Art, pp. 27-28.

Swift's Irish Whiggishness is in sharp contrast to Temple's, which was thoroughly English. Despite Temple's long residence in Ireland and his earlier career as a public servant and member of the Irish Parliament, his Whiggishness included the tolerance of Dissent and the fondness for the Calvinist Dutch and King William, feelings which Swift never shared. Temple had asked William to appoint Swift to an English living, but if William did promise, he failed to come through. Despite Swift's early ode to William, written soon after he had first joined Temple's household, in which Swift praised the king as the savior of England, and despite Swift's acceptance of the Revolutionary Settlement, he detested William and the Dutch. As Tory propagandist he had turned the English against their Dutch ally, so that they had few qualms about the Tories' betrayal of their promises. Many years later, when Swift was reading and making marginal notes in Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time, Swift's intense hatred of William, although the king had been dead for more than thirty years, still provoked Swift to condemn him and call him a liar for having falsified his official statement of intent prior to his departure for England, for William had flatly denied he came for any other purpose than to restore the English nation.

Swift's Irish Whiggism would not let him share Temple's tolerance of Dissent and his fondness for William. Swift's views were from Temple, with two exceptions: Swift's unswerving High Anglicanism, that made him intolerant of all Dissenters; and his later espousal of the oppressed Irish, which developed out of his own compassion during his enforced Irish residence. It is true that Swift's hatred of science and natural philosophy had formed before he went to Moor Park, yet there Temple's own distrust of these disciplines further reinforced Swift's. But Swift's hatred of war, his honest, above-board diplomacy and politics, his negative philosophy of history that stressed the role of man, rather than of circumstance, his devotion to common sense, his love of polite learning, his literary tastes, his prose style--these Swift owed to Temple.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF BURNET'S BELIEFS

Swift first met Bishop Burnet while visiting in London between November 1703 and June 1704, when he had interrupted his duties as vicar of Laracor in Ireland to seek a more promising preferment in England. Almost two years earlier, when the Tories in the English House of Commons were impeaching five prominent Whig lords, Swift had ventured into English politics with his first political pamphlet, *A Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions Between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and Rome* . . . . Swift concealed his authorship of the pamphlet, in which he argued that the Tories' actions against the Whigs were similar to the proceedings that had ruined the liberties of ancient Athens and Rome. Swift called for both parties to cease their quarrels, lest they, too, reduce the government to anarchy and prepare the way for a tyrant.

When Swift returned to London in November 1703 and found that his pamphlet had enjoyed a great success among the Whigs, his vanity prompted him to reveal his authorship. Although the Whigs were out of office and could not offer him the English preferment that the pamphlet might have earned him, several prominent Whigs, among them Bishop Burnet, Lord Somers, and Lord Halifax, sought out Swift, paid him their esteem, and promised him the greatest of preferments, if ever they regained the power to dispense them.

Burnet further told Swift that when his enemies accused him of writing the pamphlet, he had been forced to disown it to escape impeachment. When the preferment promised by the Whigs never materialized, Swift held Burnet among those who failed him.[1]

After this first meeting with Burnet, Swift soon had further conversations with him, since the Whigs asked Swift's help to defeat the Tories' bill in the House of Commons to prohibit occasional conformity, the device Dissenters used to circumvent the Test Act and to quality for public office. Here was Swift's chance to write for the Whigs and make himself their hero, but because he believed the Whigs' stand weakened the Established Church, he hesitated while he grappled with his conscience. Although the Whig leaders, Burnet one of them, assured Swift that their opposition to the bill would not injure the Church, Swift stalled. His Irish Whiggism had not prepared him for such a dilemma; he found his own party adherence quite out of joint with that of his English Whig brethren, who supported Dissent. At last when Swift did yield to pressure and wrote a pro-Whig pamphlet, he finished it a day too late to be printed. Without his aid, the bill was defeated in the Commons.[2]

During Swift's conferences with Burnet about occasional conformity, they also discussed the public affairs in which Burnet had participated. Three decades later, when Swift was reading Burnet's History of His Own Time, he remembered these conversations. In his Short Remarks on Bishop Burnet's History, Swift recalled: "He hath told me many passages not mentioned in this History, and many that are, but with several circumstances suppressed or altered." In this same commentary Swift revealed what Burnet's later biographers would confirm, that Burnet, despite his lifelong dedication to religious tolerance, in his last years became a prejudiced, anti-Catholic fanatic: "After all, he was a man of generosity and good-nature, and very communicative; but, in his ten last years, was absolute party-mad, and fancied he saw Popery under every bush." But Swift's most violent disagreement with Burnet was on Burnet's tolerance of Dissent and his persistent desire to broaden the Episcopal structure so as to bring the Non-Conformists back into the Anglican fold: "He never gives a good character without one essential point, that the person was tender to dissenters, and thought many things in the church ought to be amended."[3]

---

[1] Prose Writings, IV, xxiv; VIII, 119.

[2] Ibid., V, xxxvi-xxxvii; VIII, 119; Quintana, Mind and Art, pp. 20-21, 106-113; Quintana, Swift: An Introd., pp. 72-73.

Although such thoughts were far in the future in 1703, when the two men amicably discussed English politics and the Occasional Conformity Bill, the foundations of their future rupture were already laid, for the vicar of Laracor was disillusioned with the Whigs for their tolerance of Non-Conformity; his resentment of those who held this attitude would increase, until he, too, would become as fanatical in his hatred of them as Burnet became of Popery. Much as the circumstances of Swift's background and early career formed his rigid High Anglicanism that made him the implacable enemy of Dissent and caused him to change his Irish Whiggism to support Queen Anne's Tory peace party, so the circumstances that shaped Burnet's moderate Anglicanism and brought him to the Whigs are likewise worthy of examination.

---

[3] Prose Writings, V, 184.

Burnet came of an ancient, landed Scottish family of Aberdeenshire. His father, a solid, respected lawyer of Edinburgh, was a moderate Episcopalian in religion and an Erastian in politics, in that he staunchly supported the king and held that the Church must be wholly subservient to the state. Burnet's mother was a zealous Presbyterian, a sister of Archibald Johnston, Lord Warriston, the author of the National League and Covenant, which in 1637 had established Presbyterianism as the state religion of Scotland and had bound all Scots to uphold it. Burnet's father, in defiance not only of his wife's family, but also of every other man of importance in Edinburgh, had refused to sign the Covenant, because it abolished Episcopacy in Scotland and legalized armed resistance to defend the newly established Kirk.

Burnet's birth in 1643 occurred in troubled times. The Scots, already in rebellion against Charles I's attempt to enforce Episcopacy, had in that year pledged their army by the Solemn League and Covenant to support the English Parliament, in return for its pledge to preserve Presbyterianism in England, Scotland, and Ireland. Scotland fought on the side of the Parliamentary armies during the Civil War, but when it ended in 1648 the king allied himself with the Scottish nobles in a last-ditch effort to regain his throne, and the combined Scottish and royalist armies were soundly defeated in this

Second Civil War. After the King's execution, the Scots proclaimed his son king and won his support of the Covenant. Cromwell defeated the Scots' army, under the young king's banner, once in Scotland at Dunbar, and a final time at Worcester on English soil. In 1651 Scotland sullenly submitted to Cromwell. These violent events of his youth influenced young Burnet, who ever after would hold that Presbyterianism was incompatible with orderly government. Burnet's early acceptance of his father's political Erastianism and his moderate Episcopacy was reinforced by his youthful observations of Presbyterianism at its worst. As a staunch Erastian, Burnet also subscribed to passive obedience, the doctrine that outlaws resistance to government on the grounds of religious persecution. Burnet condemned the Scottish Covenanters' defense of their religion with armed force, and although he respected his uncle, Lord Warriston, the leader of the Remonstrants, the most extreme of the Covenanting sects, and later would try to save him from execution, Burnet held the Covenant unconstitutional. Until the Revolution of 1688, Burnet believed in the Hobbesian contract theory of government, that the monarch is absolute. Burnet rejected the prevailing seventeenth-century belief in divine right, and, as did Hobbes, believed that because the people had willingly granted the king his powers, they owed him their passive obedience, even should he trample on their religion and take the lives of the innocent. Immediately prior to the Revolution of 1688, Burnet disavowed passive obedience and embraced a theory that justified rebellion if the king exceeded the authority granted him in the original contract, a position similar to that which

John Locke would espouse a decade later to justify the Revolution; but Burnet remained an Erastian all his life, in that he believed the Church must be subservient to the state.

Soon after the Restoration in 1660, when Burnet was ordained into the ministry of the Church of Scotland, Charles II broke his promise to the Scots and reestablished Episcopacy in Scotland. Although Burnet was Episcopalian, he resented the king's action, especially his ejection of the Non-Conformist ministers and his harsh repression of the Non-Conformist congregations. In 1662 Burnet met Robert Leighton, a moderate Scottish Episcopal minister who preached a restricted Episcopacy for Scotland. Burnet would come to regard his twenty-three years' friendship with Leighton as among the greatest blessings of his life. Burnet's admiration for Leighton increased during the five years Burnet was minister of the rural parish of Saltoun. In 1669, when Burnet was offered the professorship of divinity at the University of Glasgow, he eagerly accepted, for Leighton was now Archbishop of Glasgow, and Burnet welcomed the chance to serve in his diocese. Leighton had devised a scheme of accommodation, which he hoped would unite the Presbyterians and Episcopalians and bring peace to the strife-torn Scottish Kirk. By now Burnet was recognized in Scottish ecclesiastical circles and had been offered bishoprics, due to his intimacy with the Earl of Lauderdale, the king's high commissioner in Scotland. Together Leighton and Burnet toured Scotland and visited the churches, especially those in the west where the Non-Conformists had most often violated the Conventicle Act, urging the ministers to compromise and subscribe to accommodation. The venture failed; the extremists of both sides, Presbyterian and Episcopal, refused to consider compromise. By 1671, both men had given up the program, Leighton forever, but not Burnet, who soon resumed his work for a reconciliation between Episcopacy and Dissent and continued to do so to the end of his life.

In 1674, when Lauderdale turned to more brutal persecutions of the Non-Conformists, Leighton resigned his archbishopric and retired to England. Clarke, Burnet's biographer, believed that Leighton and Burnet's failure to reestablish the Church of Scotland upon the foundation of accommodation may have been owing to the fundamental nature of the Kirk, which as Leighton would later say, inclined strongly "towards synods and assemblies." To this day, Episcopacy has never been popularly accepted in Scotland; the trend of Scottish church history has always run counter to Erastianism, passive obedience, and Episcopal government. However, another of Burnet's views has been accepted as the Scottish national view, and this both Leighton and Burnet worked to bring about: no one form of church government is so superior as to rule out others, and no one is unchurched for preferring another ecclesiastical organization.[4]

Burnet not only absorbed Leighton's Erastianism and toleration of Dissent, but he also adopted Leighton's reforming attitude towards Episcopacy; Leighton qualified his approval of the Established Church of England: he admired its doctrine, worship, and governmental design, but he condemned its administration as corrupt. Burnet's early resentment of Charles II's High Church policy in Scotland intensified until at last he took positive action against it. In 1666, while Burnet was still at Saltoun, he drew up a memorial, in which he listed the Scottish bishops' abuses, and sent copies to the leading churchmen. In his protest, Burnet defended Episcopacy, but he chided the bishops' neglect of their duties: they failed to visit their dioceses, they neglected their preaching, they meddled in secular affairs, they harassed the Presbyterians and drove out their ministers, and they made no effort to convert the Non-Conformists. Burnet censured the bishops' worldliness, their dishonesty in taking church revenues for their private use, and their poor preaching. Burnet's attack was bold, especially for one but twenty-three years old, new in his calling, and acting alone, without consulting any of his superiors about the advisability of such an act. The archbishops rebuked Burnet severely and one even threatened to excommunicate him, yet Clarke commended Burnet's plain-speaking document and the sting of its truth, although admitting it was marred by self-conceit.[5]

---

[4] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. 127-128.

Burnet continued to appeal for Episcopal reforms in his preface to the second volume of his History of the Reformation, published in 1680. Miss Foxcroft believed that by then Burnet's Anglican fervor had long passed its high-water mark.[6] In the preface Burnet hit such Episcopal administrative abuses as pluralities, non-residence, inequalities in parochial endowments, and corruptions of the ecclesiastical courts.

---

[5] Clarke and Foxcroft, p. 66.

Many years later, when William III rewarded Burnet with the bishopric of Salisbury for his part in bringing the Revolution of 1688, Burnet proved to be an energetic, conscientious bishop who never neglected his diocesan duties. Miss Foxcroft likened him to Bishop Wilberforce, the nineteenth-century reformer. Both men stressed competently trained clergy; Burnet established his own theological seminary at Salisbury, much as Wilberforce did at Cuddleson a century and a half later. Burnet supervised the clergy of his diocese closely. At his own expense he augmented poor livings, established pensions for aged clergy, and operated a school for poor children. He scrupulously refused to use church revenues for his own or his family's benefit. Miss Foxcroft noted, however, that Burnet lacked Wilberforce's administrative skill.[7]

Burnet's reforming zeal and his desire to raise the status of the ministry are evidenced in his manual on pastoral care, published in 1692. Burnet saw the ministry as a divine vocation and a minister's pastoral duties as his highest function. He urged reform as the only means of converting Dissenters. Burnet examined the aims of the early Christian pastorate, Gregory of Nazianzen, Chrysostom, and Jerome, and noted how, in contrast, the contemporary clergy had lost the dedication of these early Fathers. He listed the subjects ministers should study; he condemned the Anglican Church for its failure to discipline, especially to excommunicate its offenders; he attacked the Church courts; ever mindful of Leighton's example, he commended extempore eloquence in pulpit preaching.

---

[6] Clarke and Foxcroft, p. 66.

[7] Ibid., pp. 289-299.

Osmund Airy considered Burnet's most lasting reform his securing Queen Anne's Bounty to augment poor church livings.[8] Burnet first had appealed to William III to give back to the Church "the first fruits and the tenths," taxes that the Popes had first levied to finance the Crusades. Henry VIII had expropriated the income for the Crown; Charles II had granted it to his mistresses and illegitimate children. After the Peace of Ryswick in 1697, Burnet pressed William to restore the monies to the Church, but not until 1704, in the reign of Anne, did Burnet succeed in persuading the Crown to remit the "first fruits and tenths."

Leighton's strengthening of Burnet's religious tolerance and reforming zeal prepared Burnet for other forces that shaped his beliefs. He owed much of his tolerance, as did other liberal churchmen of his age, to the Cambridge Platonists. In his History of His Own Time, Burnet described meeting these distinguished men during his visit to England in 1663. Burnet contrasted the

---

[8] "Burnet, Gilbert," Dictionary of National Biography, III (22 vols.; Oxford, 1882; reprinted 1949-1950), 403.

Anglican divines who lived in luxury and neglected their clerical duties with the Cambridge Platonists, who kept the Restoration Church from losing its esteem, chief among them Doctors Whichcote, Cudworth, Wilkins, More, and Worthington. Burnet developed each of their characters: Whichcote, who upheld liberty of conscience, had his students read Plato, Tully, and Plotinus, and urged them to consider the Christian religion as a means of elevating and sweetening human nature; Burnet commended Cudworth's and Wilkins' exemplary lives and their teaching the evils of narrow partisan belief; More tried to stem the tide of atheism. Burnet condemned Thomas Hobbes's denial of the spirit, his belief in man's motivation solely by fear and self-interest, and Hobbes's defense of absolute government. More, the leader of the Cambridge Platonists, held the opposite of Hobbesian doctrine and approached religion and morality philosophically. Under the Cambridge Platonists' tutelage, a new set of theologians had arisen in the Restoration Church, an event which Burnet considered the most noteworthy occurrence of his age. These divines, who shunned superstition and enthusiasm and loved the Anglican constitution and liturgy, did not deem other forms unlawful, but tolerated other faiths. For their latitude of belief, men of narrow views called them "Latitudinarians," and because they delved to find the reasons for things, their enemies called them "Socinians." However, neither the Cambridge Platonists nor the Latitudinarians were tolerant of Roman Catholicism; they were zealous against Popery, for which the Papists denounced them as atheists and deists.

Burnet named the Latitudinarian ministers in London whom he came to know intimately: Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Patrick, Lloyd, and Tenison. He drew their characters and praised them as the greatest divines of the age who taught him the best part of what he knew. They reformed the old pedantic preaching method, which leaned heavily on quotations from the early church fathers and a detailed concordance of controversial expositions of the Scriptures, with little heed for their practical applications. The Latitudinarians' sermons were plain and short; they included a brief paraphrase of the text, avoided pedantic content, and opened the very nature of things.[9]

Although Burnet had always believed that the true end of preaching was to give men plain notions of religion and to engender their affections, the Latitudinarians stirred Burnet to renew his intellectual activity. But the Latitudinarians did not change Burnet's style of oratory. They were masters of the new, lucid, concise diction that stripped off the Elizabethan ornamentation and the early Caroline fullness. Such deliberate, careful speech was not suited to Burnet's fondness for extempore oratory. Burnet's best pulpit delivery was on the spur of the moment. During Burnet's ten years' tenure at the Rolls Chapel in London, he built himself a reputation as a pulpit preacher. His child-like love of display and his passion for expounding and giving advice made him the extempore preacher of his day. Miss Foxcroft described Burnet's habit of preaching out the hour-glass, then holding it aloft, and turning it for another hour, as the overflow audience that crowded the Rolls Chapel all but shouted for joy.[10]

---

[9] Bishop Gilbert Burnet, History of His Own Time (London, 1850), Book II, 127-131.

Burnet's moderation and tolerance, learned from his father, from Leighton, from the Cambridge Platonists, and from the Latitudinarians, confirmed by his own experience with the factional disputes of his times, set the tenor for his Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles, his magnum opus of theological argument, which he composed over several years and left in manuscript for seven more, while he submitted it to each of the Latitudinarian ministers for approval before publication in 1699. In this work Burnet examined Post-Restoration Anglicanism. He explored the Predestinarian controversy, giving Calvinism its due, and concluded that human intelligence is inadequate to resolve the question of predestination, and that unanimity of opinion is an impossibility.

Burnet's moderation and tolerance again prevailed in his treatment of the non-juring bishops, the prelates who were deprived of their offices for their refusal to recognize the legality of William's accession to the throne and to swear their allegiance to him. Burnet could not bring himself to condemn the nine non-jurors; although he did not sympathize with their position, for as an instrument of the Revolution he had helped put William on the throne, he would not castigate them for their principles.

---

[10] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. 138-142.

Burnet's attitude toward the Test Act and occasional conformity has perplexed many who consider his opposition to the Tory-sponsored bills to prohibit occasional conformity in the reign of Anne as self-contradictory. Yet an examination of Burnet's position reveals that his stand was consistent with his moderate, Latitudinarian views. Burnet always favored the Test Act, because he believed that all Non-Anglicans, especially Catholics, should be barred from public office. Further, Burnet was against occasional conformity because he believed it defiled the sacred rites of the Church to receive the sacrament solely to qualify for public office. Burnet wrote in favor of the 1682 Test Act for Scotland; yet, when eighty of Scotland's best clergy were turned out because of it, Burnet's tolerance prompted him to find them livings in England. Again, when the Quaker William Penn sought William of Orange's promise to abolish the Test Act in England should William become king, Burnet warned William to make no such promise, since the Test Act was the only security for Protestants against a Popish king. Yet, between 1702 and 1704, Burnet led the opposition in the House of Lords to each of the three Tory-sponsored bills to abolish occasional conformity. Burnet would have supported the bills, had they solely abolished occasional conformity; but because they carried the additional provision that Non-Conformists would be fined for their belief, he opposed them.

Burnet's religious tolerance was bolstered by one further experience, his acquaintance with the Dissenting faiths in Holland. Burnet had first visited Holland in 1664, shortly after he had been presented the living of the parish of Saltoun. In Holland Burnet studied the Dissenting faiths: Lutheran, Anabaptist, Brownist, Papist, and Unitarian. Because he found some good in each, he resolved never to persecute Dissenters. The Dutch Arminians' tolerance impressed Burnet most, but he found little to admire in Catholicism: he disliked their monastic systems and the preaching of their Jesuits and friars. Burnet returned to Scotland later that year with his desire to be tolerant strengthened.

More than twenty years passed before Burnet returned to Holland. Soon after the accession of the Catholic James II in 1685, Burnet had gone into voluntary exile, and, at William's invitation, had settled in The Hague. Burnet's anti-Calvinism had begun with the Scottish Presbyterians' rejection of accommodation, which Burnet attributed to their stubborn refusal to compromise. Burnet's recent travels through Switzerland had allowed him to witness the Calvinist intolerance there. Once again Burnet was drawn to the Arminians, as he had been on his first visit to Holland. Burnet stayed clear of the Whig exiles in Holland, many of them fanatic Calvinists. Burnet prevented William from being pressured by the Scottish Presbyterians in The Hague to commit himself to Presbyterian Church government for England. Prior to his departure with William and his invasion fleet, Burnet drafted that part of William's declaration wherein he bound himself to preserve the Established Church of England, to effect a comprehension of Protestant Dissenters, and to guarantee toleration for the rest.

Once William was King of England, Burnet revived his plan for accommodation, or comprehension, as it was now called, of Dissenters within the Churches of England and Scotland. Just as twenty years earlier he had worked with Leighton to modify the Episcopalian structure in Scotland to return the Presbyterians to the Anglican fold, Burnet now joined with Tillotson to modify the Church of England to bring back the Presbyterians. Their plan for Scotland was similar, only here they hoped to adjust the structure of the Presbyterian Kirk to allow reunion with the Anglicans. But both these schemes failed, too, as had the earlier one, although the two men, both Latitudinarians or Low Churchmen, as they were now called, whom William had recently made bishops, had prepared a revision of the Anglican canons, the courts, the Prayer Book, and the liturgy, which they had hoped both sides would accept.

Although Burnet's father, Leighton, the Cambridge Platonists and their off-shoot the Latitudinarians, and the Dutch Dissenting sects had fostered Burnet's tolerance and made him abhor religious extremists, in his last years Burnet became a fanatic anti-Papist, the period to which Swift referred to Burnet as "party mad," imagining he saw "Popery under every bush." Yet Burnet extolled the Catholic Counter-Reformation that originated in the Council of Trent, but he emphatically denied Papal infallibility and the miracle of the Host; he detested medieval ritual and superstition, Jesuitical casuistry, and cruel repression. However, it is a tribute to Burnet's lack of fanaticism that he was not taken in by the perjured oaths of the instigators of the Popish Plot of 1678, nor by the false testimonies of those who fanned the flames of the anti-Catholic hysteria in the months that followed. Rather, Burnet's good judgment prevailed and he dismissed the entire affair as a contrived hoax. He angered the Shaftesburian anti-Catholics by defending the Catholic victims. Although during the hysteria Burnet did publish anonymously four anti-Roman pamphlets, and he did join with those who pressed for the passage of the first two exclusion bills, he was not with the extremists. Before the third exclusion bill was initiated in 1681, Burnet drifted away from those who would have placed the Duke of Monmouth on the throne rather than the Catholic Duke of York, and now urged a less drastic solution to the succession crisis, a proposed regency of the Prince of Orange.

Burnet's intense anti-Catholic bias did not come until 1686, when he was in exile during the reign of James II. Prior to his settling in The Hague, Burnet toured the French Languedoc, where Miss Foxcroft believed he experienced the turning-point of his career. In southern France the persecutions and tortures of the Huguenots were then at their height, following Louis XIV's recent repeal of the Edict of Nantes. From then on, Miss Foxcroft observed, Burnet was fanatically anti-Catholic. Two years before Burnet's death, the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 raised Burnet's anti-Catholicism to its most intense heat, for England's betrayal of her Protestant ally Holland, as well as the terms of the treaty, made Burnet certain that Catholic France had come out with such overwhelming advantages, that Popery would soon be restored in England. Miss Foxcroft explained Burnet's error of judgment: Burnet confused the war-exhausted France of 1713 with the vigorous, prospering France of 1685, and the aged Louis XIV with the monarch in his prime thirty years earlier. Swift used the pseudonym of "Gregory Misosarum" to parody Burnet's denunciation of the treaty; he pictures Burnet poring over Foxe's Book of Martyrs, in the belief that he is living in the reign of Bloody Mary. But Swift, too, added Miss Foxcroft, had become politically impassioned.[11]

There is no better evidence of Burnet's moderation than the absurd accusations and calumny levelled at him by all extremists, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Catholic. Burnet early earned the hatred of the Scottish extremist Presbyterians for his disavowal of the Covenant. His Erastianism and adherence to passive obedience infuriated the Scots, when Burnet condemned the use of physical force against religious repression. Burnet's unflagging efforts for accommodation drove the Presbyterians to an even more implacable hatred of Episcopacy. Burnet's support of Charles II's ecclesiastical regime in Scotland rankled the Presbyterians, even though Burnet outspokenly criticized the regime and helped the ousted Presbyterian ministers find new livings in England and Ireland. Burnet's support of the Test Act was understandable for one in Anglican orders, but his opposition to the three occasional conformity bills not only outraged High Churchmen, but made him even more odious to the Presbyterians. Then, too, the Presbyterians never forgave him for his holding so long to passive obedience, since Burnet changed his position only in the last days before William's invasion of England. The Presbyterians hated Burnet for thwarting their fondest hope of committing William to Presbyterian Church government. So inflamed were the Presbyterians against Burnet that they failed to credit him for his fair treatment of Calvinism in his Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

---

[11] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. 213-214, 458-464.

Burnet was equally detested by High Church Anglicans. He was but a youth of twenty when he wrote a letter to Archbishop Sharp of St. Andrews, complaining of the evils in the Scottish Episcopal Church and of the high-handedness of Charles II's church program there. The archbishop replied to the young licentiate's boldness contemptuously. Burnet's intimacy with Leighton and the London Latitudinarians soon caused High Churchmen to scorn him, and when in 1666 Burnet framed his castigations of Episcopacy in a memorial to the Scottish bishops, Sharp considered excommunicating him. Burnet's work for accommodation and his tolerant Latitudinarianism made both Anglican and Presbyterian extremists disclaim him as a Trimmer. Burnet's vital part in the Revolution and in putting William on the throne culminated in Archbishop Sancroft's refusal to consecrate Burnet as Bishop of Salisbury. Rather than perform this sacred rite for one whom he so detested, Sancroft, a leading non-juror, appointed a council of five bishops to preside at the service. The High Churchmen, as much as the Presbyterian extremists, blasted Burnet and Tillotson's scheme for comprehension in the first year of William's reign. As William continued to appoint Tillotsonian moderates, rather than High Churchmen, to vacant sees, the Latitudinarians, or Low

Churchmen, soon controlled the Church. In 1694 William made Tenison, who had helped plan William's invasion, Archbishop of Canterbury. Five years later, Jonathan Swift was one of the High Churchmen who still resented Tenison's elevation, but Swift's reasons were even more immediate: Tenison had opposed Swift's appointment as Lord Wharton's chaplain and had kept Swift from obtaining the bishopric of Waterford.[12] Soon after the death of Queen Mary in 1695, William appointed Burnet and three other Latitudinarian Bishops, Stillingfleet, Lloyd, and Patrick, together with Archbishops Tenison and Sharp, to a commission whose main function was to recommend persons for ecclesiastical preferment. The High Churchmen fumed at the concentration of patronage in the hands of six Latitudinarian prelates. Burnet's leadership of the House of Lords' opposition to the bills against occasional conformity and his voting with the majority for the impeachment of the Tory High Churchman Sacheverell made Burnet the target of the High Churchmen's execrations. Perhaps no other Latitudinarian cleric incurred the wrath of the High Church as did Burnet.

Closely allied with Burnet's Latitudinarian tolerance was his Whig politics, which had its immediate cause in his break with Lauderdale, but its deeper roots in his hatred of Catholicism. Burnet's long intimacy with Lauderdale became strained early in 1673, when Lauderdale confided to Burnet that he planned to drive the Scottish Presbyterians to rebellion and bring in an army of Irish Papists to cut their throats. When Lauderdale's persecutions provoked the Scots' Parliament to denounce the king and his government of Scotland, Lauderdale blamed Burnet for instigating the denunciation, although Burnet protested his innocence. Lauderdale was unconvinced, and vengefully undermined Burnet at court. Burnet lost his Glasgow professorship, and late in 1674 the king banished him from his service. Alienated from those who could give him preferment, Burnet retaliated by revealing Lauderdale's threat to use Irish mercenaries in Scotland. In the furor that followed, Lauderdale was impeached and Burnet was called before a Parliamentary investigating committee to clarify his charges against Lauderdale. In his History Burnet frankly admitted his error in meddling with secular matters. Despite the king's efforts to keep Burnet out of London, Lord Holles secured Burnet the pulpit at the Rolls Chapel early in 1675. Burnet, suffering from his disgrace, was soon drawn to the Whigs, the anti-court party then forming around the Earl of Shaftesbury. Burnet distrusted Shaftesbury and, as we have seen, did not subscribe to all of the party's creed: his passive obedience made him reject the Whigs' endorsement of physical force against oppression, and his contempt for Presbyterians would not allow him to share the Shaftesburians' sympathies for the Presbyterians barred from office by the Test Act. Besides his disaffection with the court, Burnet's bond with the Whigs was their shared dread of Popery, since the Duke of York, heir-presumptive to the throne, had recently made public his Roman Catholicism. Burnet's moderation soon caused him to drift away from the Whigs' exclusionist policies and to align himself with those who settled for less dangerous remedies to avoid a Catholic succession. Even so, the High Churchmen, who were of the king's party, the Tories, accused Burnet of being Whig and exclusionist. Burnet staunchly denied it, insisting he was neutral. He did not mind being called a Jack-of-both-sides, but he vehemently disclaimed the Whig label.

---

[12] "Tenison, Thomas," DNB, XIX, 540.

During his ten years' chaplaincy at the Rolls, Burnet inclined more and more to the Whigs, until at last his anti-Catholic sermons so angered the king that he had Burnet dismissed. In exile in Holland, Burnet rendered valuable service to the Whigs by smoothing the way for the bloodless Revolution of 1688. Burnet did much to secure the peaceable accession of William and Mary, by persuading Mary to yield the authority of government to her husband, and by drafting William's declaration to preserve the Established Church and to tolerate Dissent. Even after the Revolution, Burnet tried to be neither Whig nor Tory, hoping for a great coalition party against France. William, too, tried coalition ministries for the first five years of his reign, but their unpopularity caused him in 1694 to change to the Whigs.

Burnet's opening of the negotiations with the Electress of Hanover furthered the Whigs' interests by ultimately securing the succession of the Protestant Hanoverians. Yet Burnet was not always with the moderate branch of the Whigs. His breach of propriety in entering the debates in the House of Lords' prosecution of Fenwick for Jacobite conspiracy violated the Church's position of clerical non-interference in capital cases, and allowed the Tory

High Church party to identify Burnet with Whiggism in its most prejudiced form.

With the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession and the accession of Queen Anne in 1702, the Tory queen dismissed Burnet from the court positions he had held under William and Mary. Even this reversal did not send Burnet completely over to the opposition or cause him to withdraw his support of the queen's coalition ministries. When the Whigs won the general election of 1708 and the moderate Tories Godolphin and Marlborough deserted to the Whigs, Burnet still hoped for a coalition of all parties that would prosecute the war against France, although Burnet was now undeniably a Whig. In this same year he wrote the famous Conclusion to his History, in which he deprecated the party spirit of the Whigs and Tories. Just as he never ceased to work for the comprehension of Dissenters and Anglicans, he also worked for a coalition of Whigs and Tories. Even though Burnet was a moderate in a time of fierce partisanship, he was a target of the Tory Doctor Sacheverell's attack in his violent pulpit denunciation of the Whig government in 1709. Burnet's hopes for moderation in the new Tory administration of Harley and St. John in the fall of 1710 were dashed when extremist Tories soon came to dominate it. Burnet attacked its peace negotiations and shared the disgust of the Whigs with the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht. In a speech in the House of Lords he attacked the Tories for sacking England's allies and making a separate peace with France.

Although Burnet had failed to keep abreast of the times, his career cannot be assessed in the light of his failing political judgment at age seventy, for during the major portion of his fifty-five years of public life, he was a conservative reformer who stood for coalition and compromise. Later ages would not deem him a fanatic, but rather a Whig of the Revolution whose moderate attitudes had made the Revolution possible. Swift's accusations of Burnet's party madness can never be applied to the whole of Burnet's career; Swift's personal involvement with the Tories' peace negotiations between 1710 and 1713 makes understandable his anger with Burnet's joining the Whigs' opposition.

Other factors outside the field of religion and politics contribute to the composite of Burnet's beliefs. Unlike Swift, Burnet was devoted to mathematics and experimental science, both of which he considered a necessary prelude to theological study. His lifelong friendships with Robert Boyle, the great chemist, and with Sir Robert Moray, the first president of the British Royal Society, as well as Burnet's membership in that organization, attest to his interest in science. Burnet studied mathematics and science in Scotland, England, and on the continent. He built his own laboratory, and during those periods that he was in ill favor at court, he eagerly returned to his scientific and mathematical studies. Burnet knew the leading English and Scottish scientists, as well as those in Holland, France, and Germany. He valued the friendship of Leibniz, the scientist-philosopher of the court of Hanover. The two men's common religious and political interests first brought them together, since Leibniz, a staunch

Calvinist, had conveived of a plan to unite all European Calvinists and Lutherans. Leibniz, too, helped Burnet secure the Hanoverian succession, first by convincing William of its necessity to preserve Protestantism, and then by persuading the reluctant Electress of Hanover to commit her family to the shaky English throne.

Mathematics and science were but Burnet's favorite diversions; his serious interest was religious doctrine. In his manual on pastoral care Burnet urged theological students to have a thorough background in classical literature, history, medical science, and philosophy, but even more significantly, in the patristic writings, the Biblical commentators, and the Hebrew, Anglican, Calvinist, Deistic, and Atheistic doctrines. Burnet's greatest theological work, His Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles, summarized the theological arguments of Post-Reformation Europe, with special attention to the Predestinarian controversy. Burnet suppressed his anti-Calvinist bias and gave Calvinism fair treatment, perhaps out of his respect for Queen Mary and her devotion to her Calvinist husband, and out of his own awe of Leibniz and his ecumenical dream. Those passages in Burnet's History that develop the religious controversies and the characters of the great churchmen are Burnet's contribution to the history of seventeenth century thought. Burnet passed lightly over the two great seventeenth century philosophers, Hobbes and Locke. Hobbes received a brief condemnatory comment; Hobbes' adversary, John Locke, was mentioned not at all. Burnet associated Locke with the extremist Whigs who fled to Holland when the exclusion controversy raged in England during the last troubled tears of Charles II's reign. When Burnet did at last give up passive obedience, he wrote his own justification of it anonymously, only a few days prior to his departure with William's invasion fleet. This statement appeared eighteen months before Locke's Essay on Government, which espoused principles similar to Burnet's. Much as Burnet hated Locke, he defended Locke's Essay on Human Understanding against Stillingfleet's attack. Since Stillingfleet was Burnet's intimate friend, Burnet's independence of mind deserves note.

An examination of the backgrounds of Burnet's beliefs is not complete without an understanding of Burnet's philosophy of history. Unlike Swift, who attributed history to personal causes, Burnet assigned history to general causes, but he conceived of these causes as theological. He saw the cause of the Revolution of 1688 as divine intervention: William was "a glorious instrument raised up by God" to restore England's liberties. God intervened to save William's fleet from a storm at sea; a Protestant wind carried William to England, but kept James at home. Later, in the war against France, a fog saved the English Navy from the French; a dry autumn helped Marlborough's land campaigns. Protestantism had passed through five crises, beginning with the Reformation, but each time God had provided a hero to save it. William was the hero of the fifth crisis, which did not end until the accession of the first Hanoverian, George I, provided a line of Protestant kings for England. Burnet's History of His Own Time is an account of the fifth crisis.

The sum of Burnet's beliefs--his Latitudinarian Anglicanism, his Erastianism, his Whiggism, his fondness for mathematics and science, his concern for theological argument, and his philosophy of history--all stand in sharp contrast to Swift's. If the two men have a common meeting-ground, it lies in a few limited areas, such as their acceptance of the Revolutionary Settlement and in their efforts to secure the remission of certain church incomes to augment poor livings, in Burnet's case the "first fruits and tenths," for the Church of England; in Swift's, the "first fruits and twentieths," for the Church of Ireland. Although they hold in common their failure to find complete satisfaction in Anglicanism, Burnet's reforming zeal drove him to crusade for specific administrative changes. Swift's harshest denunciations of Burnet were that he was soft to Dissenters, that he was party to putting William on the throne, and that he joined the Whig opposition to the Treaty of Utrecht. Their other differences Swift would have overlooked: Burnet's veneration of mathematics and science, his love of theological argument, his Scottish nationality, his anti-Catholic prejudice, and even his Erastianism, although Swift believed in neither a Whig state-Church, nor a Tory Church-state, but in a Church independent of civil power and inaccessible to civil decrees.[13]

Burnet's tolerance of Dissent, for all of Swift's clamor, was restricted. Burnet supported the Test Act that barred Dissenters from office, yet he did not want them punished further for their Non-Conformity: their ministers might preach in their own churches without interference; Dissenters were not to pay fines. Burnet's moderate position was restriction without persecution, a recognition and a respect for other faiths. Swift, on the other hand, went no further than the tolerance of Dissent that the Revolutionary Settlement guaranteed. He outspokenly condemned the Dissenting ministers; his rigid High Anglicanism allowed no sympathy for them. He considered them noisome gadflies who must ever be barred from the Anglican communion. Where Burnet saw Catholicism as the most dangerous threat to Anglicanism, Swift saw Dissent.

---

[13] Quintana, Mind and Art, pp. 136-141.

Swift could not forgive Burnet for his alliance with William. Burnet overlooked William's Calvinism for his greater role, that of saving England from a Catholic king. Even Temple's fondness for William could not change Swift's attitude. To the end of his life, Swift considered William a liar, a turncoat, and a usurper.

Swift made his angriest anti-Whig comments in Burnet's History in Book VII, the final years of Queen Anne's reign, when Burnet joined the Whigs against the Tories' peace efforts, the negotiations which Swift was committed to defend. Burnet had come to the Whigs with reservations; Swift had joined the Tories with mixed feelings. Burnet's passive obedience, rooted in his Scottish background, made him uncomfortable among the English Whigs; Swift's Irish Whiggishness clashed with its English counterpart and at last drove him to the Tories. Burnet resented the Whig label and held out for a coalition party as determinedly as he had for religious comprehension; Swift thought of himself as a moderate, even after the ministry he upheld turned Tory extremist. Swift's English Tory career ended abruptly with the party's defeat in 1713. After his emergence from ten years of political inactivity, he championed the Irish against the Whig Hanoverians. Burnet continued to serve the Whigs the two remaining years of his life; his denial of Whiggism was futile. It was Burnet's Latitudinarian Anglicanism and his Whiggism, his middle-of-the-road religion and politics, that made Swift condemn him as an extremist.

CHAPTER III

THE MARGINALIA AS A REFLECTION OF SWIFT'S AND BURNET'S RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL DIFFERENCES

Scholars have not established when Swift began reading Burnet's History of His Own Time, which appeared in two volumes, the first in 1724, the second a decade later. Herbert Davis, the most recent editor of Swift's marginalia, believes that between 1734 and 1736, while Swift was making the final revision of his own history, The Four Last Years of the Queen, he was at that time or later reading and marking Burnet's History. Davis noted that the approximate time Swift finished his reading and annotation of both volumes can be established from Swift's dating a marginal note near the end of Burnet's work "January 1739,"[1] the single instance of a dated comment among the nearly three hundred separate marginal entries Swift made in Burnet's History. If we accept Davis's chronology, we may assign the composition of the marginalia to the latter half of the decade that immediately followed the most remarkable period of Swift's literary production, the years 1719-1729, when as Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin and as Ireland's foremost patriot, Swift wrote Gulliver's Travels, as well as scores of pamphlets and verse for the cause of the oppressed Irish. The Drapier's Letters, the most noteworthy of Swift's Irish tracts, scored a victory over Sir Robert Walpole, the Whig minister, and struck a blow at England's mercantilism, which had ruined Ireland's industries and trade. In another flood of tracts and verse Swift attacked England's government of Ireland at the constitutional level and warred with Anglican bishops, Presbyterians, and the Irish House of Commons.

---

[1] Prose Writings, V, xxxv-xxxvi.

Swift made almost all of his marginal comments in the first volume of Burnet's History, which ends with the Revolution of 1688. We may assume that Swift read only a small portion of the second volume, which begins with the reign of William and Mary and ends with the Peace of Utrecht, since he made not a single marginal note in the first five hundred pages. The dozen comments Swift did make are in the final hundred pages, which treat the close of the peace negotiations, when Swift was chief pamphleteer and apologist for Queen Anne's Tory ministry. Yet these notes are the fiercest Swift made in the entire work; he calls Burnet "Dog," "false prophet," and "vile Scot."

The marginalia received their first public attention when they were printed in part in the European Magazine between January 1795 and February 1796. Scott included them in his 1814 edition of Swift's works; M. J. Routh correlated them with Burnet's text in his 1823 Oxford Press edition of Burnet's History. Most recently Herbert Davis has re-edited the marginalia and appended them to the appropriate passages from Burnet's text for the Oxford Press Shakespeare Head edition of Swift's prose works.[2]

---

[2] Prose Writings, V, xxxvi.

When we survey the whole of Swift's marginalia in Burnet's History, we discover that Swift never changed the opinion he gave in his brief essay, Short Remarks on Bishop Burnet's History, in which he blasted Burnet for his uncouth style, his unreliable sources, and his partiality to Dissenters, stinging rebukes that Swift leavened slightly by crediting Burnet with generosity, a good nature, and communicativeness.[3]

It is not surprising that Swift found so much to abominate in Burnet's History. He detested Burnet's tolerant, Low Church Anglicanism, which he believed embraced a softness to Dissent; he distrusted Burnet's Whiggishness; he was incensed at Burnet's alliance with the Calvinist Dutch prince, William of Orange. Swift had no sympathy for Burnet's lifelong devotion to comprehension, a scheme for re-uniting Dissenters with Anglicans; Swift rankled at Burnet's displeasure with the Act Recissory, which re-established Episcopacy in Scotland at the Restoration, even though Swift knew that Burnet, an Erastian to his death, and an upholder of passive obedience until the Revolution of 1688, rejected the Scottish Covenant, the Presbyterian constitution of the general assembly, and a Church independent of civil authority. Swift was so steeped in High Church Anglicanism that he regarded all Dissenters as fanatics, rebels, and tyrants who must forever be excluded from office. The single concession he would allow them was religious toleration. Because Burnet never ceased to hope that the base of Episcopacy could be broadened to bring back the Presbyterians, Swift held Burnet's religion suspect. He likewise repudiated Burnet's party, the Whigs, because he saw their expanding power as a threat to the squirearchy, which Swift considered the most durable element in government. Swift feared that the new Whig party, its rapidly growing membership coming from the rising merchant class, would soon manipulate the government to promote its own interests and would crush England's liberties. In a letter to Pope, January 10, 1721, Swift wrote:

---

[3] Prose Writings, V, 183-184.

> I ever abominated that scheme of politicks, (now about thirty years old) of setting up a mony'd Interest in opposition to the landed. For I conceived there could not be a truer maxim in our government than this, that the possessors of the soil are the best judges of what is for the advantage of the kingdom: If others had thought the same way, Funds of Credit and South-sea Projects would never have been felt nor heard of.[4]

Swift had changed his own political affiliation from Whig to Tory when his further allegiance to the former would have compromised his High Church conformity. However, as a Tory, he never abandoned the principles an Irish Whig held most dear: the disavowal of Papacy and the Pretender. He based his political creed on a balance of power, equally divided among king, nobles, and commons, a balance that the Puritan Commonwealth had destroyed when it established the tyranny of the dictator Cromwell. Swift held that both Charles II and James II had upset the fragile balance, but that the Revolution of 1688 had restored it. Because Swift disavowed passive obedience, non-resistance, Stuart absolutism, and a Popish king, he accepted the Revolution and its Settlement, yet he condemned William III as a usurper who had used dishonest means to get the English throne. In the previously quoted letter to Pope, Swift also expressed his opposition to a Catholic king and stated the principles upon which he justified the Revolution:

---

[4] Swift, Correspondence, II, 372-373.

> First, I always declared my self against a Popish Successor to the Crown, whatever Title he might have by the proximity of blood: Neither did I ever regard the right line except upon two accounts, first as it was establish'd by law; and secondly, as it hath much weight in the opinions of the people. . . .
>
> As to what is called a Revolution-principle, my opinion was this; That whenever those evils which usually attend and follow a violent change of government, were not in probability so pernicious as the grievances we suffer under a present power, then the publick good will justify such a Revolution; and this I took to have been the Case in the Prince of Orange's expedition, although in the consequences it produced some very bad effects, which are likely to stick long enough by us.[5]

Swift's own plan for thwarting a Catholic succession would have been less drastic. In his marginalia he stated he would have favored a regent, with James the ruler in name only.

Swift was persistently antagonized by Burnet's attitude toward Dissent. This antagonism appears early in the marginalia, when Swift clashes with Burnet's treatment of the Puritan preachers of the Scottish Kirk during the reign of Charles I. The Covenant of 1581, which established the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland, did not abolish Episcopacy. The two faiths coexisted peacefully until 1637, when Charles I tried to force Episcopacy upon the Scots by compelling them to use Laud's liturgy. The Scots retaliated by declaring war on the king and re-drafting the Covenant of 1581 into the National League and Covenant, which abolished Episcopacy in Scotland, established Presbytery as the national religion, and justified the use of arms to protect it. In his History Burnet scoffs at the prominent Presbyterian preachers of the Kirk in this era; he deplores their insincere devotion, their long, fervent prayers, and their mediocre learning. BURNET: "Some of them [among them Rutherford] affected a strain of stating cases of conscience not with relation to moral actions, but to some reflexions on their condition and temper."[6] Swift, irritated that Burnet should concern himself with the Puritan preachers' actions, interprets Burnet's attention as catering to Dissent. Swift wants all Dissenting preachers condemned summarily, and he regards any heed paid them as a lightening of that sentence. SWIFT: "Great Nonsense. Rutherford was half fool, half mad."[7]

---

[5] Swift, Correspondence, II, 372.

Burnet passes over the First Civil War, which ended in 1646, with Charles's defeat by the combined armies of the Scots and Cromwell. In 1648 the defeated king in desperation subscribed to the Solemn League and Covenant, by which he bound himself to establish Presbytery in England, in return for the Scots' joining the remnants of his army and invading England. The coalition was soon defeated in this Second Civil War by Cromwell and Fairfax. The king was tried and executed; Parliament abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords and declared England a Commonwealth. The Scots, smarting from their defeat and the failure of Presbytery in England, refused to accept Cromwell and proclaimed Charles II, the late king's son, their king. The following year, 1651, Cromwell defeated Charles II at Worcester in his attempted invasion of England, placed General Monk to rule over Scotland, gave the Scots representation in the English Parliament, and did not molest the Scottish Kirk. When a dispute arose in the Kirk, religious enthusiasm reached so high a peak that services were frequent and fervid. BURNET: "The crowds were far beyond the capacity of their churches, or the reach of their voices" (I, 41). SWIFT: "I believe the Church had as much capacity as the minister" (268). Although Swift is merely poking fun at Burnet's squinting pronoun, we are reminded of the Aeolists in *A Tale of a Tub*, those audacious pretenders to wisdom, who worshipped the four winds and drew their inspiration for their fulminations from "certain subterraneous *Effluviums* of *Wind*, delivered with the *same* Pain to the Priest, and much about the *same* Influence on the People." Swift again mocked fanatical preachers in *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* when de described their peculiar habits of canting, droning, and snuffling, and attributed their zeal to sexual desire.[8]

---

[6] Burnet, History, Book I, 21. (Hereafter I shall place "I" [or appropriate book number], followed by the page number, in the text at the end of all passages I quote from Burnet. I have correlated Davis's pagination of Burnet's History with the London, 1850, edition.)

[7] Swift, Prose Writings, V, 267. (Hereafter I shall place the page number of the marginal note in the text at the end of all passages I quote from Swift's marginalia in Prose Writings, V.)

---

[8] *Prose Writings*, I, 99, 171-190.

The first Scottish Parliament of the Restoration met in 1661 and passed the Act Recissory that outlawed Presbytery in Scotland and re-established Episcopacy. Most of the Presbyterian ministers submitted to Anglican ordination, but the more than two hundred who refused were ejected from their churches. Burnet resented England's extreme Anglican policies for a nation whose masses had never supported Anglicanism and who had been nurtured on nearly a century of Non-Conformity. When Burnet was urged to accept a vacant pastorate, his dissatisfaction with Charles's harsh Church policy compelled him to refuse. Burnet condemns the ministers who filled the vacated posts as a worthless lot, in sharp contrast to the worthy divines they replaced. He concedes that the ousted Non-Conformists had conscientiously attended to their pastoral duties, visiting their congregations, urging them to private devotions, extemporizing sermons, and interpreting doctrine, for which their people loved them. Yet he disparages the ejected ministers as "little men," given to extremes, prone to flattery, ruled by prejudice, who deserved their punishment because they stirred their people to rebel against the king (II, 101-103). SWIFT: "Strange inconsistent stuff" (269). Swift balks at Burnet's attempt to treat the ejected divines fairly. He regards Burnet's presentation of both the Anglican and the Presbyterian positions as softness to Non-Conformity, refusing to acknowledge that Burnet's Erastianism and commitment to passive obedience did not necessarily compromise his Anglicanism.

A second area in which Swift accused Burnet of favoring Dissent was in Burnet's attitude to the Scottish Covenanters. Here also Burnet's Erastianism and passive obedience, that caused him, as it did his father before him, to disavow the Covenant, would exonerate Burnet of Swift's charge, but Swift believed that Burnet's protests were but lip-service to cloak his true beliefs, which Swift reads into several passages. The Act Recissory, in addition to abolishing Presbytery and re-establishing Episcopacy in Scotland, annulled the legislation of the solidly Puritan Parliaments from 1633 to the Restoration, solely because these Parliaments had contained no bishops. Burnet objects strongly to this provision, because "to annul a Parliament was a terrible precedent, which destroyed the whole security of government" (II, 80). SWIFT: "Wrong arguing" (269). Swift sides with the Royalist-High Church position and upholds the Act Recissory, finding in Burnet's argument further proof that Burnet aligned himself with Dissent. Swift refuses the Dissenters any political power, basing his denial on the lesson of the Commonwealth, which he claimed was that once the Dissenters controlled government, they established a tyranny.[9] Burnet assails Middleton, the king's high commissioner for Scotland, because he confirmed the Act Recissory as soon as Parliament had passed it, without awaiting the king's instruction, a high-handed gesture which Burnet regards pernicious, since Middleton had "given the king's assent to a law that must forever take away all the security that law can give: no government was so well established, as not to be liable to a revolution: this would cut off all hopes of peace and submission, if any disorder should happen thereafter" (II, 80). SWIFT: "Wrong weak reasoning" (269). Swift's rejection of Burnet's statement is but another accusation that Burnet supported the Covenanters' Parliaments.

---

[9] Quintana, Swift: An Introd., p. 70.

Burnet's account of the Pentland Rising of 1666 gives Swift an even better opportunity to tweak Burnet for siding with the Covenanters. After the king's army defeated the Pentland rebels and executed those prisoners who refused to renounce the Covenant, ministers and any others suspected of aiding the rebels were tortured to betray the instigators of the rebellion. When Burnet calls the Pentland Covenanters "a poor harmless company of men, become mad by oppression" (II, 159), Swift aims an ironic barb, "A fair historian" (272), at Burnet's minimizing of treason.

Swift scarifies Burnet's treatment of the Covenanters' leaders who warred with Charles I's army in the defense of Presbytery, which they had pledged to do when they signed the National League and Covenant. Because Burnet's father had been abused by the Covenanters for his refusal to sign the document, and had gone into exile to escape their vengeful wrath, Burnet's fairmindedness should be commended in his account of the Scottish Restoration Parliament's handling of the three leading Covenanters, Argyle, Warriston, and Guthrie. When this Parliament interrupted its legislative work to sit as a court of justice, the first political offender it brought to trial was the Marquis of Argyle. Although he was exonerated of any part in the king's death, he was convicted of treason and beheaded on

May 27, 1661, solely on the evidence of letters that proved he had voluntarily, rather than compulsorily, supported Cromwell. Modern historians assert that Argyle was condemned, not for what he had done, but for what he might have done had he lived.[10] Burnet describes his solemn, skillful defense and the composure with which he met his execution (II, 84). SWIFT: "He was the greatest Villain of his age" (269). Burnet's judgment agrees with that of later historians who have gained the advantage of a truer, historical perspective.

A few days later the same Parliamentary court sentenced and hanged James Guthrie. Guthrie spurned his lawyer's advice, preferring to speak in his own defense, which was merely a statement that his acts had been those agreeable to the Kirk, which held that "the doctrine delivered in their sermons did not fall under the cognisance of the temporal courts, till it was first judged by the church" (II, 85). SWIFT: "Popery" (269). Swift equates the Kirk's assumption of a jurisdiction that overruled the temporal law courts with the prerogative that the Roman Church exercised in its long struggle with the secular powers of princes. Swift needed not have feared that Burnet would have upheld the Kirk court; his Erastianism committed him to a Church subservient to the State.

---

[10] G. N. Clark, The Later Stuarts, 1660-1714, Vol. X: The Oxford History of England, ed. Sir George Clark (14 vols.; Oxford, 1934-1949), 255; Richard Lodge, The History of England from the Restoration to the Death of William III, 1660-1702, Vol. VIII: The Political History of England, ed. William Hunt and Reginald L. Poole (12 vols.; London, 1912), 31-32, 35.

The Parliamentary court issued a warrant for the arrest of Lord Warriston. BURNET: "The proceedings against Wariston [sic] were soon dispatched, he being absent" (II, 85). SWIFT: "Waristoun [sic] was an abominable Dog" (269). Warriston had escaped to France and evaded capture until July 1663, when he was returned to Edinburgh and speedily executed.[11] Lord Warriston, the prime author of the National League and Covenant, was Archibald Johnston, Burnet's mother's brother. We must recall that although the Johnstons were strict Presbyterians and extremist Covenanters, Burnet rejected his mother's family's political and religious beliefs and attached himself to his father's Erastianism and moderate Episcopacy. When Burnet later mentions the execution of Lord Warriston (II, 139), Swift taunts: "Was he hanged or beheaded? A fit uncle for such a bishop" (271).

Because Swift refused to concede any changes in Episcopacy to appease Dissenters, he scorned Burnet's comprehension plans. Swift's own reasons for refusing to budge from his High Church position are found in a statement Burnet himself made when he described the High Church reaction to a comprehension scheme early in the Restoration. The High Church party, led by the Earl of Clarendon, had quashed the proposal, in the belief that "it was unworthy of the Church to go and court, or treat with enemies, when there was no reason to think, that after we had departed from our grounds, which was to confess we had been in the wrong, that we should gain much by it, unless it was to bring scorn and contempt on ourselves" (II, 175). SWIFT: "I think so too" (273). Swift neatly adapts Clarendon's party's statement into his own position, that any compromise with Dissent would only weaken the Established Church.

---

[11] Lodge, pp. 32, 36.

Swift's anger flares at Burnet's reporting the Dissenters' reaction to the conciliatory measures extended them by James II, who forgot that the High Church party's opposition to the exclusion bills had saved him his throne. James snubbed the Anglicans and wooed the Dissenters. BURNET: "The Presbyterians seemed reconcileable to the Church; for they loved Episcopal ordination and a liturgy [Swift's underlining]" (IV, 446). SWIFT: "A damnable lie" (286). Burnet's assertion that Dissenters had qualities receptive to comprehension is a position that Burnet at all other times would deny, since he blamed the failure of his and Leighton's comprehension plan for Scotland on the Presbyterians' stubborn refusal to make any concessions to Episcopacy.

The Dissenters were aware that James's olive branch was not genuine, and that he was only courting their support for a sweeping act of toleration that would bring in Catholicism. Burnet describes the Dissenters' cautious maneuvers: "The more considerable among them resolved not to stand at too great a distance from the Court, nor to provoke the King so far as to give him cause to think they were irreconcileable to him" (IV, 447). SWIFT: "They all complied most shamefully and publicly, as is well known" (286). Swift rejects Burnet's soft-pedalling the Dissenters' hypocrisy in collaborating with the king's dark plans.

Swift's only inconsistency in his otherwise implacable hostility to Dissent and in his hammering at Burnet for leaning toward that persuasion is Swift's attitude toward William Penn. Swift reverses his customary position to stand up for the Quaker against Burnet's unflattering report of him. Burnet's persuasion of William not to yield to Penn's proposals is another strong link in the chain of evidence that Burnet did not support Dissent, as Swift believed. While Burnet was in exile in The Hague during James's reign, Penn came to the Dutch court to secure William's promise to abolish the Test Act in England, in the event he became king. Burnet prevented William's making any such promise, just as he also kept William from yielding to the pressures of the English Whig and Scottish Presbyterian exiles in The Hague to commit himself to Presbyterian Church government for England. Burnet's own tolerant religious views are incorporated into the Revolution Settlement of 1689, that preserved the Established Church, yet gave toleration to all outside that faith, except Catholics and Unitarians. BURNET: "Pen [sic] the Quaker came over to Holland. He was a talking man . . . . He had such an opinion of his own faculty of persuading, that he thought none could stand before it . . . he had a tedious luscious way, that was not apt to overcome a man's reason, though it might tire his patience" (IV, 441). SWIFT: "He spoke very agreeably and with much spirit" (285).

Swift based his belief that Burnet was lenient toward Dissent chiefly on Burnet's giving his attention to the Puritan preachers of the Kirk, on his careful presentation of the Covenanters' cause and the treatment of the

Covenanters' leaders, on his disapproval of the Act Recissory and Charles's harsh religious settlement of Scotland, on his work for comprehension, and on his alleged refusal to condemn the Dissenters for their cooperation with the Catholic James. Swift's own unswerving adherence to the Established Church made him the implacable enemy of all Dissenters, whether Scottish Covenanting Presbyterians, Commonwealth Puritans, or any other of the English Non-Conforming sects. Swift would not countenance an Anglican prelate who would take pains to present their case, nor one who would dare question the constitutionality of the Act Recissory and point to the inhumanity of enforcing it upon a Non-Conformist nation, nor one who dedicated himself to the cause of comprehension. Swift deemed Burnet's acts a violation of the sacred trust of the Anglican office, tantamount to the secular offense of treason.

However incensed Swift was with Burnet for these offenses against Anglicanism, he saved his angriest outcries for Burnet's insinuations that the Established Church was in collusion with the Catholics, and that the Non-Conformists were the only true Protestants. Late in Charles's reign, after the anti-Catholic hysteria generated by the Popish Plot had subsided, the Catholic Duke of York regained some of his popular favor. BURNET: "The Nonconformists were now prosecuted with much eagerness. This was visibly set on by the Papists: and it was wisely done of them; for they knew how much the Nonconformists were set against them" (III, 347). SWIFT: "Not so much as they are against the Church" (280). Here Swift first voices the conviction he maintained and reasserted throughout his life, that the Non-Conformists were much more the enemy of the Established Church than they were of the Church of Rome.

Once the Catholic Duke of York became king, he appointed Catholics to high governmental posts both in England and Scotland. When the Scottish Parliament balked at his actions, he dissolved it; next he replaced both the Archbishop of Glasgow and the Bishop of Dunkeld with Catholics. Soon the nation became inflamed against Popery; many of the negligent Episcopal clergy stirred themselves to oppose the imposition of Catholicism. BURNET: "But the Presbyterians, though they were now freed from the great severities they had long smarted under, yet expressed their unconquerable aversion to Popery" (IV, 434). SWIFT: "Partial dog" (285). Swift thus hits back at Burnet's implication that the Presbyterians were Popery's greater enemy.

Because Swift also interpreted Burnet's remarks about Dissent as jabs at the Established Church, his persistent hacking at Burnet for favoring Dissent is closely related to his marginal parries of Burnet's alleged attacks on Episcopacy, and more especially, on the High Churchmen. Swift was certain that Burnet was contemptuous of the cloth, because Burnet was an outspoken critic of some practices of the Established Church throughout the fifty-five years of his clerical career. Burnet was twenty-three and newly ordained when he composed his memorial criticizing the untoward conduct of the Scottish bishops and proposing sweeping reforms of the Church; likewise in his preface to the second volume of the History of the Reformation of the Church of England (1680), Burnet condemned such Anglican abuses as pluralities, non-residence, the inequality of parochial endowments, and the corruptness of Church courts; he again sketched these abuses and reiterated the need for reform in his Pastoral Care (1692). Burnet's attacks became more partisan when he hit the Anglican clergy of the lower ranks; his enemies first detected his new line of attack in the unauthorized 1703 edition of his History of His Own Time, printed from a stolen manuscript. He continued his slighting remarks about the lower clergy, while at the same time upholding the bishops, in a new preface to a third edition in 1713 of his Pastoral Care. Later that year, in his Introduction to the Third Volume of the History of the Reformation of the Church of England, Burnet made his most serious charge against the High Church and the Tories, when he accused them of plotting to bring in the Pretender so as to return England to Catholicism.[12]

Swift resented Burnet's reforming zeal, yet one of his rare instances of agreement with Burnet was his approval of Burnet's reform program that would have strengthened the financial structure of the Established Church and put its shaky fiscal policies on a firmer footing. Burnet was disappointed that the Church did not reorganize its financial policies at the Restoration, especially the management of its temporalities.

BURNET:

Almost all the leases of the church estates over England were

---

[12] Prose Writings, VIII, ix-xxv.

> fallen in, there having been no renewal for twenty years. The leases for years were determined; and the wars had carried off so many men, that most of the leases for lives were fallen into the incumbents' hands; so that the church estates were in them: and the fines raised by the renewing the leases rose to about a million and a half. It was an unreasonable thing to let those who were now promoted carry off so great a treasure. If the half had been applied to the buying of tithes or glebes for small vicarages, here a foundation had been laid down for a great and effectual reformation (II, 126).

SWIFT: "He judges here right, in my opinion" (271).

Swift's concern for the material welfare of the Church had deepened after his year as Prebend of Kilroot, an Anglican enclave in the Presbyterian stronghold of Ulster. Kilroot was an impoverished parish that subsisted on a small revenue inadequate for its needs; its buildings were in ruins; its glebes were few; many of its tithes had been impropriated to laymen. Swift had found the morale of its clergy shockingly low. The same conditions pervaded the entire Church of Ireland. Many Anglican landlords avoided paying tithes; often the temporalities were on long lease at small fee, which compelled the parishes that were too poor to support a parson to merge and form pluralities; the clergy were morally lax, some even diverted funds and practiced simony.[13]

Despite Burnet's concern for temporalities, in his Introduction to the Third Volume of the History of the Reformation, he allowed his Whig partisanship to compromise his otherwise consistent stand on the Church's method of obtaining revenue and maintaining its fabric. In his eagerness to draw a parallel between the times of the Catholic Bloody Mary and the reign of Queen Anne, to arouse England to the imminent peril of Catholicism, he adopted a position on Church revenues that wholly contradicted his earlier, sounder proposals for better fiscal management. In the Introduction Burnet assailed the Church's methods of increasing its revenue under Queen Mary: repealing the Statute of Mortmain, to prevent the Crown's obtaining perpetual ownership of property, and preventing the Church's renewal of leases let at too small a fee. Swift found the fallacy in the bishop's argument, when he reminded Burnet that these two methods were the sole means for the Church to increase its revenue. Swift chided Burnet for asserting that the Church's adding to its property was a Popish practice.[14]

---

[13] Ehrenpreis, I, 154-162.

One of Swift's prime concerns was the management of temporalities. He abhorred the appropriation of tithes to secular persons; he felt too little had been done to alleviate the poverty of poor parishes; he resented the inequality of temporalities that provided richly for some parishes, while several hundred were too poor to support their parson and relied upon the charity of a lay patron to pay his subsistence. Swift's own proposal to relieve these impoverished parishes was that a small part of the abbey lands be applied to poor bishoprics and that the bishops distribute the money among their needy parishes.[15]

---

[14] Prose Writings, IV, 66-67.

[15] Ibid., 64-65.

A decade later Swift again took a stand on temporalities; this time he opposed the higher clergy. In 1723 the landed gentry backed a bill in the Irish House of Commons that would have reduced the possessions of the Church by altering the terms under which the Irish bishops leased their lands. Swift's pamphlet, Some Arguments against Enlarging the Power of Bishops in Letting of Leases, was instrumental in defeating the bill. Nine years later Swift again blocked the bishops in the Irish Parliament when they introduced two bills, one of which would have compelled newly appointed clergymen to build houses when their benefices lacked them; the other would have divided rich parishes. Swift took the side of the lower clergy and wrote two pamphlets to defeat the bills. Swift opposed these measures, since he saw them as a means for the bishops to work financial hardship upon the inferior clergy.[16]

With the exception of temporalities, Swift rejected Burnet's other proposed reforms, especially if they were any part of Burnet's comprehension plan. Swift considered liturgical change as but a lure offered to the Presbyterians. "I think they acted wrong" (270), notes Swift, on Burnet's account of a liturgical change made by a committee of bishops early in the Restoration, even though the change was made to prepare the way for an Act of Uniformity that made the Prayer Book compulsory in worship (II, 125).

---

[16] Quintana, Swift: An Introd., pp. 128, 169; Quintana, Mind and Art, p. 259.

Swift would not suffer Burnet to impugn the character of the Anglican clergy. Burnet accuses the bishops of appropriating Church income to their own enrichment and the lower clergy of following their example. Some left large estates at their deaths; others indulged in luxury and high living on the pretense of hospitality (II, 127). SWIFT: "A base innuendo" (271). Swift also resented Burnet's carping that the Anglican clergy neglected their pastoral duties. When James II's Catholic policies made the Anglican clergy in Ireland adopt a firmer stand against Catholicism, Burnet claims that their new attitude did not make them better Christians, "nor were the clergy more diligent in their labours among their people, in which respect it must be confessed that the English clergy are the most remiss of any" (IV, 438). SWIFT: "Civil that" (285).

Swift deplores Burnet's oblique abuse of Episcopacy in his tendency to disassociate himself from the Anglicans. During his years as Professor of Divinity at the University of Glasgow, Burnet was the target of the complaints of both the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians. BURNET: "The episcopal party thought I intended to make myself popular at their cost: so they began that strain of fury and calumny that has pursued me ever since from that sort of people [Swift's underlining]" (II, 194). SWIFT: "A civil term for all who are episcopal" (274). Swift ironically assumes the pretense of agreement.

Swift was irritated at Burnet for joining the moderate Latitudinarians, who formed the nucleus of the Low Church Party that later joined the Whigs, when that party formed during the exclusion controversy. Swift slaps Burnet for praising the moderate Churchman Doctor Patrick (271; II, 129-130); when Burnet commends Archbishop's Tenison's efforts for comprehension (II, 130), Swift thunders at his long-time enemy who had blocked his receiving an English preferment: "The dullest, good for nothing man I ever knew" (271).

Burnet boldly strikes the High Church prelates: Sharp, Sheldon, Clarendon, Compton, Sancroft, Sprat, Stearn, and Morley. Within the Church these men were outspokenly contemptuous of Burnet, whom they recognized as the leader of the Low Church moderates. Of them all, Burnet is most severe on Archbishop Sharp, yet he is discreetly silent on an incident that may have caused him to single out Sharp--it was he who had cast the one vote for Burnet's excommunication after Burnet had written his memorial to the Scottish bishops. The other bishops on the council had voted for no more than censure.[17] Burnet recounts Sharp's career, who, as a Scottish Presbyterian minister, negotiated for the Presbyterians with Charles II at the Restoration, and who continued as liasion between the court and the Presbyterians, even after he had secretly gone over to the Established Church. Burnet condemns Sharp's treachery and laments Charles's appointing him Archbishop of St. Andrews. Sharp's refusal to move from his extremist Episcopalian position draws Burnet's abuse (II, 60, 101) and Swift's plaudits (269). As Burnet piles up incriminating evidence of Sharp's deceit, especially in his denial on the witness stand that he had promised amnesty to his would-be assassin (II, 60, 145-146, 187; III, 275-277), Swift repeatedly comments that some secret personal cause underlies Burnet's malice against Sharp (268, 271, 273, 278). Swift, quite unaware of the "secret cause," shows an almost clairvoyant talent for ferreting out Burnet's concealment of the whole truth, for surely Burnet knew that Sharp had voted to expel him from the Church.

---

[17] Clarke and Foxcroft, p. 66; "Burnet, Gilbert," DNB, III, 396.

Burnet describes Archbishop Sancroft as "a dry, cold man, reserved and peevish; so that none loved him, and few esteemed him" (III, 262). SWIFT: "False and detracting" (277). Swift is certain that Burnet's feeling is generated by his personal grudge against Sancroft, as well as by the rancor Burnet bore against all High Churchmen. Sancroft had denied Burnet access to Sir John Cotton's library when he was preparing the first volume of his History of the Reformation; later Sancroft had refused to consecrate Burnet when King William appointed him Bishop of Salisbury. Swift defended Sancroft's treatment of Burnet, because Swift felt that Burnet was no friend to crown or Constitution.[18]

When James declared for religious toleration, the Established Church set up an ecclesiastical commission, with power lodged in several Anglican bishops. BURNET: "Sancroft. . . lay silent at Lambeth. He seemed zealous against Popery in private discourse: but he was of such a timorous temper and so set on the enriching his nephew, that he shewed no sort of courage" (IV, 431). SWIFT: "False as hell" (285). Swift is furious that Burnet would besmirch the character of the highest Anglican prelate, especially since Sancroft demonstrated that he was anything but a timorous prelate when he and six bishops defied James by refusing to read his declaration of indulgence to their congregations. The seven prelates were imprisoned, and although they were acquitted, the king's unpolitic act was the immediate cause of the Revolution. Despite James's coercion, after William took the throne, Sancroft and four others of the seven refused to break their oaths of allegiance to James. William dismissed them from office as non-juring prelates who refused to accept the principles of the Revolution that an anointed king could be deposed and that the Church was subordinate to the state. More than four hundred of the Anglican clergy were of Sancroft's mind; these non-jurors, who refused to disavow their allegiance to the deposed James or to acknowledge William as his successor, established a separate church that lasted until the beginning of the nineteenth century.[19] Swift venerated Sancroft. In one of his earliest poems, the *Ode to Dr. William Sancroft*, an imitation of the Pindaric then in fashion, he paid tribute to Sancroft for pointing the way to Christ in an age when the Dissenters' misguided zeal would have stripped the Church of its formalities and ornament and destroyed its significance.[20]

---

[18] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. xxvi-xxvii; Prose Writings, IV, 59-60.

---

[19] Lodge, pp. 243-309 *passim*.

Burnet's most damning statement against the High Churchmen was that they were Jacobites, and that they had joined with the Tories to set aside the Hanoverian succession, bring in the Pretender, and restore England to Catholicism. During the long negotiations to end the War of the Spanish Succession, Burnet led the Low Church Whig opposition to the peace efforts of the queen's Tory ministry. When Burnet accuses the queen of involvement in Jacobite plots (VII, 874), Swift protests: "The Queen hated and despised the Pretender, to my knowledge" (293). Swift refuses to believe that the Tory peace negotiations, in which he played so vital a role, could in any way have been linked with the Jacobite intrigues to put the Pretender on the throne. The queen, eager to dispel rumors that the court was sympathetic to the Pretender, sent the Earl of Rivers to Hanover to assure the Hanoverian electress that the queen would promote the Hanoverian succession. Burnet warned the queen of the dangers if England accepted a peace dictated on France's terms. Not only would all Europe be delivered up to France, but "if any such peace should be made she was betrayed and . . . [England] all ruined: in less than three years' time she would be murdered, and the fires would be again raised in Smithfield" (VII, 874). SWIFT: "A false prophet in every particular" (293). Swift rebukes Burnet for expounding the Whig position.

---

[20] Swift, The Poems of Jonathan Swift, ed. Harold Williams (3 vols.; Oxford, 1958), I, 34.-42.

In 1713 Burnet was seventy years old; still vigorous, he was nearing the end of his long career as spokesman for the Low Church and the Whigs. Both in his writings and speeches in the House of Lords, he was becoming increasingly prone to extreme statements and dark prophecies of England's ruin. In that year, when he and Richard Steele, the key prosecutors of the Whigs' propaganda war against the Tories, were Swift's journalistic opposition, Burnet published an elaborate introduction to announce the pending publication of the third volume of his History of the Reformation of the Church of England. In it he warned England of the dangers of France and a Roman Catholic succession. Earlier that year he had published a new edition of his sermons and a third edition of his Pastoral Care, to each of which he had added partisan prefaces in which he accused the High Church and the Tories of Jacobitism. The Tories regarded Burnet's prefaces as part of the Whigs' propaganda war.[21]

In the December 7, 1713, Examiner, Swift replied to Burnet. Under the pseudonym of "Gregory Misosarum," Swift used serious protest, denial, and satirical banter to show that Burnet exaggerated the dangers of Popery; he hit the disparity between Episcopal affluence and parochial poverty; he once again accused Burnet of softness to Dissent; he vigorously defended the High Church, the queen, and her Tory ministry against Burnet's charges of Jacobitism. Swift asserted that the Tories and the High Churchmen were the

---

[21] Prose Writings, IV, ix-xxv.

Catholic James's greatest foes. He further challenged Burnet to prove any attempt by the queen's ministers to weaken the Hanoverian succession. In all fairness to Swift, it must be borne in mind that he was wholly unaware of the ministers' Jacobite intrigues. Swift continued his defense by belaboring Burnet for his failure to grasp that the nation's greater danger was Dissenters and free-thinkers, not Popery. He referred to Burnet as a "Prelate, who can smell Popery at five hundred miles distance, better than Fanaticism just under his Nose."[22] Swift interrupted his serious defense to twit Burnet whimsically: since the Dissenters and other fanatics outnumbered the Papists forty to one, England was thirteen and a third times more in danger of ruin by Dissent than Popery.[23]

Swift made a conclusive statement in defense of the High Church against Burnet's and all other Low Church Whigs' charges of Catholicism. Swift believed that a union of the Christian faiths was a dream to be hoped for, but never achieved; that the fundamental differences between the Established Church and the Church of Rome precluded their union; that Burnet's proclivity to charge with Roman Catholicism those whose religion differed from his was a heinous offense, for which error he invoked God to enlighten him:

> That there might be a perfect Union in the whole Christian Church, is a Blessing which every good Man wisheth, but no reasonable Man can hope. That the more polite Roman Catholicks

---

[22] Prose Writings, IV, 74.

[23] Ibid., 57-78.

> have in several Places given up some of their superstitious Fopperies, particularly concerning Legends, Relicks, and the like, is what no Body denies. But the material Points in difference between us and them, are universally retained and asserted, in all their controversial Writings. And, if his Lordship really thinks that every Man who differs from him under the Name of a Tory in some Church and State Opinions, is ready to believe *Transubstantiation*, *Purgatory*, *the Infallibility* of Popes or Councils, to worship Saints and Angels, and the like; I can only pray GOD to enlighten his Understanding, or graft in his Heart the first Principles of Charity; a Virtue which some *People* ought not by any Means wholly to renounce, *because it covereth a Multitude of Sins*.[24]

An assessment of Swift's marginal attacks on Burnet's religion reveals that Swift accused Burnet of being pro-Dissent, anti-Episcopal, and more especially, anti-High Church. Burnet, however, was not pro-Dissent; he was but tolerant of Dissent. Nor was Burnet anti-Episcopal; rather, he was anti-High Church. Despite Swift's repeated charge, Burnet's tolerance of Dissent went no further than Swift's in practice. Both men wanted the Dissenters barred from office, but they differed on how the Church should treat Dissenters. Swift wanted them kept out of the Anglican communion forever; Burnet wanted them brought back by liturgical and doctrinal compromise.

Swift's rigorous High Church adherence caused him to interpret Burnet's willingness to compromise with Dissent as acceptance of Dissent. But Burnet's disavowal of the Covenant, his clinging to passive obedience until the inevitability of the Revolution made it impossible, his role in preserving the Established Church in England and of saving the nation from a

---

[24] *Prose Writings*, IV, 76.

Catholic succession, and his attempt, however futile, to save Episcopacy in Scotland clearly prove Burnet was essentially, thoroughly, and consistently Episcopal and exonerate him of Swift's charges that he catered to Dissent. Swift's blindness is his refusal to credit Burnet for these achievements.

Burnet's tolerant Anglicanism drew him to the Low Church party and made him its spokesman. His crusade for Anglican reforms, his concern for pastoral care, and his work for comprehension made him anathema to High Churchmen. They resisted change; to them, and to Swift as one of them and often their spokesman, change meant decay. Swift's negative philosophy of history was ably expressed in his espousal of High Church Anglicanism, that regarded change or compromise as a step toward ruin.

Burnet's tolerant Anglicanism was ahead of its time; the program he hoped to achieve in his own lifetime would not be fulfilled until the Broad Church was founded in the nineteenth century. Coleridge adopted Burnet's ideas in his plan for a single national Church broad enough to include all religions. Later in the century the Broad Church became a reality under such leaders as F. D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, Dr. Thomas Arnold, Dean Stanley, Benjamin Jowett, and Matthew Arnold. In contrast to the High Church's emphasis on dogma and tradition, the Broad Church taught tolerance, brotherhood, social ethics, and the need for working class legislation.

Burnet's estrangement from the High Church and his disappointment at the failure of comprehension drove him at last to a fanatical position from which to fight back at his High Church enemies. Because the High Churchmen were predominantly Tory and because many Tories were also Jacobites, Burnet accused the High Church of Jacobitism. Burnet allowed his partisanship to overrule his reason, because the High Church never deviated from its Protestant position; it vehemently opposed the Catholic Pretender. Burnet's error stands; Swift's charge is valid. But Burnet was not a traitor to Anglicanism; he was a liberal for his time, a conservative reformer when judged in the perspective of history. His thinking was far in advance of his age, and more than a century had to pass before his views gained widespread acceptance.

Swift objected to Burnet's secular politics as vigorously as to his religious positions. Swift's marginalia pertaining to Burnet's politics accuse him of being anti-Stuart, pro-Cromwell and Commonwealth; they attack his Whig partisanship and his alliance with William of Orange.

Although Swift was opposed to Stuart absolutism, he objected to Burnet's refusal to grant the Stuarts any good qualities, the same attitude that Burnet could have accused Swift of holding toward Dissenters. Typical is Swift's rebuke of Burnet's condemnation of Charles I's methods of raising money during the eleven years' interim between 1629 and 1640 when he refused to call Parliament. BURNET: "He loved high and rough methods, but had neither the skill to conduct them, nor the height of genius to manage them. He hated all that offered prudent and moderate councils" (I, 17). Swift's reply, "Not one good quality named" (266), underscores his contention that Burnet was a prejudiced historian, since he refuses to allow the king any worthy characteristic.

Far more serious is Swift's accusation that Burnet favored Cromwell and his Commonwealth government. Burnet discusses Cromwell's answer to the Scots' delegation that protested his execution of Charles I, despite Cromwell's pledge when the Scots joined his army under the Solemn League and Covenant that he would allow no harm to the king's person. When the Scots confronted Cromwell with the violation of his promise, he pointed out that by the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant Parliament had also agreed to establish the Presbyterian Church in England. Since the king had broken the promise by preventing this establishment, all parties were released from any further protection of the king's person (I, 26). SWIFT: "And Burnet thought as Cromwell did" (267). Swift not only rejects Cromwell's illogical argument, but also accuses Burnet of subscribing to it.

Swift finds evidence of Burnet's fondness for the Commonwealth in his account of events that led up to the king's execution. After the Parliamentary forces led by Cromwell and Fairfax had defeated the king's combined Scots' and English Royalist armies in the Second Civil War, Cromwell expelled the recalcitrant Presbyterians and Royalists from the House of Commons, leaving only about ninety members to form the "Rump," all of whom were Independents. The Rump tried and condemned the king to death. When Burnet questioned some who had known Cromwell and his party about how they justified these acts, they told Burnet they felt themselves called to do a great service, which excused them from obedience to the laws of morality. Burnet found that the laying aside of justice was upheld by those who believed the army should act as a check on Parliament, which would give the army superiority over that body. Burnet concludes: "This shows how impossible it is to set up a commonwealth in England: for that cannot be brought about but by a military force: and they will ever keep the parliament in subjection to them, and so keep up their own authority" (I, 28). SWIFT: "Weak" (267). Swift's belief is that if Burnet were sincere in his objection that a Commonwealth can only stand by the army's tyrannization of Parliament, he would have stated his position with stronger moral indignation. Likewise Swift reads into Burnet's report of Fairfax's behavior a disposition to exonerate him in the king's execution. Fairfax, a member of the high court that tried the king, absented himself from the sessions, since he did not want to be party to condemning him to death. Burnet explains Fairfax's withdrawal: "Fairfax was much distracted in his mind, and changed purposes every day" (I, 28). SWIFT: "Fairfax had hardly common sense" (267). Swift finds further support for his belief that Burnet favored Commonwealth government in his cautious praise of Cromwell's government of Scotland. BURNET: "We always reckon those eight years of usurpation a time of great peace and prosperity" (I, 40). SWIFT: "No doubt you do" (268). Swift contemns not only Burnet's plaudit, but also the Scots, whom Swift considered an unruly nation that could have a stable government only under a totalitarian ruler.

Swift regards Burnet's complaints about the harsh injustice of Charles's Restoration settlement of Scotland as evidence of Burnet's anti-Stuart bias. Burnet's belief that the Act Recissory was unconstitutional and that the crown's execution of the Covenanters' leaders was a miscarriage of justice was to Swift proof of Burnet's disloyalty to the Stuarts. Yet Burnet's position has been supported by twentieth-century historians. Had the crown practiced the same lenity in Scotland as in England, there would have been no executions: In Scotland there were no regicides, and Charles's act of indemnity had pardoned all offenders against his martyred father; the submission to Cromwell had been involuntary. The Scots, however, had been so eager for the return of the Stuarts that they did not force the king to compromise with them as did the English. In Scotland, too, there was no control of immoderation as Clarendon and the king exercised in England. The king dealt harshly with the Scots. Swift's opinion has been overruled; Burnet's insistence that the three Covenanters' executions were not justified is accepted today by those who have judged the era with a greater historical perspective.[25]

Burnet's account of the trial of Mitchell, Archbishop Sharp's thwarted assassin, Swift interprets as but a further attempt by Burnet to slander Charles, through Lauderdale and Rothes, the king's prosecutors. Burnet disparages the qualifications of Mackenzie, the king's advocate (III, 275).

---

[25] Clark, p. 255; Lodge, pp. 31-32, 35.

SWIFT: "Envious and base" (278). Swift is angered that Burnet records with painstaking detail those events that show the king's party, especially Lauderdale, Sharp, and Rothes, in so unfavorable a light. Lauderdale, claims Burnet, refused to open the records that would have shown Rothes had earlier pardoned Mitchell, and that Sharp and others who spoke for the prosecution gave perjured testimony that Mitchell had not been promised or given a pardon. When the defense finally forced Lauderdale to open the records, Lauderdale would have granted Mitchell a reprieve, had Sharp not prevented him. BURNET: Hickes "later published a false and partial relation of this matter, in order to the justifying of it [the trial]" (III, 277). SWIFT: "A learned, pious man" (278).

Swift objects to Burnet's account of the Rye House Plot of 1683, an unsuccessful attempt by the Shaftesburian Whigs to murder the king and his brother, the Duke of York. When the conspiracy was uncovered and a number of persons arrested, Burnet feared the Protestant cause might be ruined. Burnet dismisses the conspirators' plans as "but talk" (III, 355). SWIFT: "All plots begin with talk" (280). Swift is annoyed that Burnet attempts to mitigate treason. Burnet's intimate friend Lord Russell, executed as a conspirator, Burnet believed innocent. On the scaffold Russell had read a statement protesting his innocence and justifying physical resistance to government under extreme conditions, despite Burnet's utmost efforts to prevent his doing so. Afterward when Burnet was accused of writing Russell's statement and was summoned before the king's council, he refused to disclose to the Duke of York what Russell had said to him as his confessor and would swear only that Russell had written his own statement (III, 366). SWIFT: "Jesuitical" (281). Swift considers Burnet's refusal to cooperate with the king's investigation an overt act of disloyalty to the crown.

Burnet continues with an account of the trials and executions of the conspirators in the Rye House Plot; he protests that many were convicted on insufficient or trumped up evidence; he condemns Chief Justice Jeffreys' directed verdicts. Prior to his execution Halloway gave his version of the Plot, an account that so minimized its significance that the crown suppressed its publication. At length Burnet concludes that the Rye House Plot was no more than "some treasonable schemes, that were never likely to come to anything" (III, 375). SWIFT: "Cursed partiality" (281).

Swift further refuses to believe Burnet's accusation that the king was guilty of evil complicity in the execution of Armstrong, another of those accused in the Plot (III, 376; 281). Because of Burnet's intimacy with Russell, the king removed Burnet from the pulpit at St. Clement's, but allowed him to continue his preaching at the Rolls Chapel. But when Burnet continued to deliver sermons outspokenly against Popery, the king dismissed him from that position also. Now that he had been stripped of all opportunities, Burnet retired to the continent. Burnet defends his last sermon, claiming he made no direct thrust at the king (III, 386), but Swift adds: "I doubt that" (283).

In summing up the life of Charles II, Burnet points to a parallel between his character and that of the Roman emperor Tiberius (III, 395). Swift accuses Burnet of malice and falsehood (283) and counters by giving his own appraisal of Charles and a stinging reproof of Burnet as a historian: "He was certainly a very bad prince, but not to the degree described in this character, which is poorly drawn, and mingled with malice very unworthy an historian, and the style abominable, as in the whole history, and the observations trite and vulgar" (283).

Swift finds more anti-Stuart prejudice in Burnet's account of the birth of James II's son, the Prince of Wales, in June 1688. Prior to this event, the deaths of the royal couple's previous children in infancy, the queen's feeble health, and the king's advancing years had seemed to assure the succession of the king's elder Protestant daughter, Mary of Orange. Many Protestants believed the queen's pregnancy was feigned, in order to have the throne pass to a Catholic, a belief now discredited. Burnet's story is that a supposititious infant was brought into the queen's bedchamber in a warming-pan and foisted upon the nation as the heir to the throne. When this child died within a few hours, still another infant was substituted for it (IV, 475-478). Swift writes off Burnet's account as spurious: "All coffee-house chat" (287). Later, after James's abdication, when an official investigation was made of the Prince of Wales's birth, Burnet retracts his statement and explains his part in the investigation: "I was ordered to gather together all the presumptive proofs [of the birth of the pretended Prince of Wales] . . . .

these did not amount to a full and legal proof: yet they seemed to be such violent presumptions, that, when they were all laid together, they were more convincing than plain and downright evidence" (IV, 516). Burnet's forthright admission of his error and his willingness to set the record straight are characteristic of his undogmatic, flexible intellect.

Swift claims that Burnet's account of the Revolution of 1688 is untruthful, especially his insinuation that James voluntarily abandoned his throne; Swift claims he was forced from it. Burnet's account is that once William landed in England with his army and moved to Exeter, the king's leaving London in the disguise of a servant amounted to the desertion of his subjects (IV, 505). SWIFT: "Abominable assertion, and false consequences" (289). Swift's contention is that James had no other choice than to flee. Burnet describes the king's capture by a party of fishermen, to whom he identified himself. It is Burnet's belief that the Jacobite party and its subsequent activities originated in this incident of the king's capture, "for if he had got clear away, by all that could be judged, he would not have had a party left. . . . But what followed upon this gave them a colour to say, that he was forced away and driven out" (IV, 505). SWIFT: "So he certainly was, both now and afterwards" (289). Swift is eager to stress that James had been expelled. When Burnet sums up James's abdication and expresses sympathy for him (IV, 506), Swift doubts Burnet's sincerity (290).

A survey of the marginalia in which Swift accuses Burnet of

Commonwealth leanings points to Burnet's alleged attempts to whitewash the Commonwealth leaders, his failure to condemn vigorously enough the army's tyranny over Parliament in a Commonwealth government, and his nostalgic reference to the peace and prosperity of the Commonwealth era in Scotland. Yet Burnet was neither pro-Cromwell nor pro-Commonwealth. He did not exonerate Cromwell, but, much as he did with Dissenters, he presented the Commonwealth leaders' positions. Swift again mistook Burnet's flexible intellect that allowed him to project the viewpoints of those whose opinions were not his own. Swift lacked the open-mindedness or the perception to discern that these were not Burnet's beliefs. Burnet's admission of the peace and prosperity of Commonwealth Scotland, the era of his childhood and youth in Edinburgh, was but Burnet's fairness that gave credit where due. When the Commonwealth period is contrasted with the period of the Covenanters' wars that immediately preceded it, Burnet's observation is accurate.

Despite his accusations of Burnet for anti-Stuart prejudice and disloyalty to the crown, Swift had no delusions about Stuart tyranny. He opposed both the theories of divine right and passive obedience; he justified the Revolution and accepted its Settlement. Yet he condemned the Commonwealth as a worse tyranny than that of the Stuarts, and he would not justify Cromwell's execution of Charles I. Although his charge that Burnet favored Cromwell and Commonwealth will not stand, Swift's charges of Burnet's anti-Stuart prejudice that led him to extreme statements and distortions of the truth are true. But Swift's further insinuations that Burnet's anti-Stuart bias caused him to be disloyal to the king are not justifiable.

Burnet's anti-Stuart prejudice grew out of his experience with Charles's mismanagement of the Restoration in Scotland. Burnet had first-hand experience with Stuart absolutism at its worst, in the king's cruel, repressive policies and his unfortunate choice of men who represented him in Church and state--Archbishops Sharp and Alexander Burnet; high councillors Rothes and Lauderdale. Historians, too, have condemned both.

Swift's marginal jabs at Burnet's Whiggishness are many. Burnet's early attraction to the Whigs dates from 1674, when his break with Lauderdale ended his Scottish career and drove him to London, where he soon found his place among the moderate Latitudinarians who also were associated with the new Whig party forming around the Earl of Shaftesbury. At this period Burnet was a moderate Whig, who was attracted to the party because it opposed the king's party and Roman Catholicism; he rejected much of its creed, especially its advocacy of physical force against oppression and its opposition to the Test Act. Burnet did not become a thorough-paced Whig until fourteen years later, when he gave up passive obedience at the time of the Revolution.

Swift's objections to Burnet's Whiggishness are heaviest when Burnet attacks Queen Anne's Tory ministers and their peace negotiations. Burnet gives Robert Harley, whom Anne raised to Earl of Oxford and lord treasurer, an unflattering character: "It soon appeared that his strength lay in managing parties, and in engaging weak people by rewards and promises, to depend upon him; but that he neither thoroughly understood the business of the treasury, nor the conduct of foreign affairs; but he trusted to his interest in the queen and the favourite" (VII, 872). Harley, who was eager to secure peace with France, trusted the negotiations to Matthew Prior. BURNET: "Prior had been taken a boy out of a tavern by the Earl of Dorset, who accidentally found him reading Horace; and he, being very generous, gave him an education in literature" (VII, 872). SWIFT: "Malice" (293).

The negotiations that Prior instigated ended in the Peace of Utrecht, 1713, but when the Tory ministry was overthrown the next year, Prior's career also was destroyed. Burnet condemns the "many mercenary pens" that justified the Tories' negotiations and defamed Britain's allies, especially the Dutch. Swift's virulent *Conduct of the Allies* pointed out that Britain had no reason to continue the war, since if she did succeed in dislodging the Bourbon Philip V from the Spanish throne, she would immediately face an equally dangerous threat of the Spanish coronation of Charles VI, the Austrian emperor, which would unite Spain and Austria. This Hapsburg threat, said Swift, would be as formidable to Britain as the Bourbon threat of a united Spain and France. Burnet writes of Swift's polemic: "This was done with much art, but *with no regard to truth* [Swift's underlining], in a pamphlet entitled the *Conduct of the Allies and of the Late Ministry*" (VII, 873). SWIFT: "*It was all true* [Swift's underlining]" (293).

Swift staunchly defends Queen Anne against Burnet's charges of Jacobitism (293; VII, 874); he defends her when Burnet criticizes her creation of twelve new peerages and her adjournment of the House of Lords to implement her ministry's peace efforts (294; VII, 878); he refutes Burnet's claim that the Lords hoped to reinstate the Catholic Stuarts at Anne's death (294; VII, 890). He objects when Burnet charges the Duke of Ormonde, commander of England's army, with breaking his alliance with Prince Eugene of Savoy by secretly corresponding with France in the field (289; VII, 891). Later historians verify Burnet; Ormonde did betray his country to the enemy, upon the instructions of Anne's unscrupulous minister, St. John.[26]

Swift protests that Burnet did not give a true account of the Mohun-Hamilton duel that occurred on the eve of the Tory Duke of Hamilton's departure for France to bring the peace negotiations to a close (294; VII, 892). Swift holds that Burnet's account of the duel, in which both Hamilton and his Whig opponent, Lord Mohun, were killed, fails to give Hamilton the good character he deserved.[27] A modern historian has related the duel to the great animosity that was then running at high pitch between the

---

[26] Lodge, pp. 12-14, 27, 198-199, 229; George M. Trevelyan, The Peace and the Protestant Succession, Vol. III: England under Queen Anne (3 vols.; London, 1934), 216-219. Ehrenpreis described the second Duke of Ormonde as one "whom Swift well knew and too much admired" (Swift, I, 10).

[27] Swift, Journal to Stella, ed. Harold Williams (2 vols.; Oxford, 1948), II, 571-572.

Whigs and the Tories. All good Tories, and Swift among them, believed that Hamilton had been murdered as part of a Whig plot.[28]

Swift struck at Burnet's Whiggishness mainly in Burnet's partisan criticism of the Tories' peace negotiations and in his accusations of Jacobitism against Anne and her ministers. It is here that the morbid fears of Popery and the "party madness" of Burnet's last years are most apparent. Swift's innocence of his party's Jacobitism allowed him to believe Burnet was crying "Wolf." What Swift did not know was that Harley, St. John, Ormonde, and Marlborough had traitorously undermined the war effort and had endangered the Revolutionary Settlement and the Protestant succession by their intrigues with France and the Pretender. Burnet's accusations were not unfounded, but his attempts to implicate the queen and the High Churchmen were. They, as was Swift, were innocent of the dark designs.

Burnet's Whig affiliations fit neatly with his alliance with William of Orange. Swift never ceased to hate the Dutch Calvinist, who, when he became king of England, appointed Dissenters to governmental offices, elevated Low Churchmen to bishoprics, and established Presbytery as the national Church of Scotland. Swift hated William even more for his devious maneuvers to get the throne. Swift resented Burnet's cooperating with William in his usurpation and Burnet's helping William frame his declaration to hoodwink the English people into believing that he came only to restore their liberties in a legally elected Parliament, not to take the throne.

---

[28] Trevelyan, III, 245-247.

Swift held William responsible for the murder of John DeWitt, the grand pensioner of Holland during the years preceding William's reaching his majority (275; II, 214). Modern historians uphold Swift and charge William for doing nothing to prevent or punish this cruel deed.[29] Swift uncovers William's "secret vice," which Burnet mentions, but prudishly declines to discuss. BURNET: "He [William] had no vice, but of one sort, in which he was very cautious and secret" (IV, 439). SWIFT: "It was of two sorts--male and female--in the former he was neither cautious nor secret" (285). Swift speaks candidly of William's abnormal sexual practices, and at the same time slaps Burnet for his duplicity to hint at an unsavory topic and then feign modesty so as not to reveal it. According to the Earl of Stanhope, a later historian, Burnet told Lord Dartmouth that "some things [about William] were too notorious for a faithful historian to pass over . . . ." Stanhope then added his own testimonial of Burnet's veracity: "It may suffice to say that the words of Bishop Burnet should be carefully weighed. It is no light charge that is here implied. It is no light quarter from which the charge proceeds. It comes from a faithful friend and a constant follower--from one who owed to William not only his return from exile but his Episcopal rank--from one who had no imaginable motive to deceive us, and who was most unlikely to be himself deceived."[30] Swift's reference to the "female" part of William's vice points to Elizabeth Villiers, maid of honor to the Princess of Orange, and William's mistress. William entrusted her with some of his official correspondence; it was she who wrote to the Duke of Shrewsbury, urging him to return to his secretaryship of state after he had resigned. When William rewarded Mrs. Villiers, Countess of Orkney, with a large grant of land in Ireland, a Parliamentary committee censured him for it.[31]

---

[29] Lodge, 111-112.

[30] Stanhope, History of England, II (2 vols.; London, 1870), 40-41.

Swift pounces on Burnet's record of an early conversation with William as proof of his repeated charge that William, from the first, plotted to get the English throne, and that he courted Burnet, because of his firsthand knowledge of Church and state and his acquaintance with prominent men in England. BURNET: "When he [William] found I was in my opinion for toleration, he said, that was all he would ever desire to bring us to, for quieting our contentions at home" (IV, 439-440). "It seems the prince even then thought of being King" (285), is Swift's canny observation, for as early as the fall of 1686, Penn had been sent to The Hague to secure the prince's promise of a grant of indulgence. The king's opponents had already selected William to succeed James, because William was a Calvinist, known for his tolerance, whose wife was a member of the Church of England. William, then, would satisfy both Whigs and Tories. Even more important, he had a large enough army and navy to crush James's forces at the very outset, before sympathizers could rally to him. By early 1687 those who would take action did nothing except in concert with William of Orange.[32]

---

[31] Charles Talbot, Correspondence of Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury, ed. William Coxe (London, 1821), pp. 19-20; Stanhope, II, 5.

From then on Swift contemns Burnet's activities at court, all of which were directed toward preparing William's invasion and taking the English throne. It was Burnet who discussed with Princess Mary the delicate subject of her husband's status, once she would be queen of England. Burnet advised her to turn over the real authority to her husband, as "this would lay the foundation of a perfect union between them, which had been of late a little embroiled" (IV, 440). SWIFT: "By Mrs. Villiers, now Lady Orkney; but he proved a damned husband for all that" (285). Swift is always eager to translate Burnet's cryptic insinuations into readily understandable information. The next day, Burnet continues, he took Princess Mary to her husband; she "in a very frank manner told him, that she did not know that the laws of England were so contrary to the laws of God, as I had informed her" (IV, 440). SWIFT: "Foolish" (285). When William stated that in the nine years of their marriage he had never dared discuss with his wife the matter which Burnet had brought about in one day, Burnet was from then on in William's trust.

Swift dismisses as feeble contrivances Burnet's efforts to justify William's invasion by attributing it to causes other than his own greed. When William learned that James had illegally sent an ambassador to Rome to persuade the Pope to ally himself with England and France against Holland, Burnet claims William was then justified "to make use of all advantages that might offer themselves, since one prince's negotiations with the representative of a second country to invade a third gives a right to the third prince to defend himself" (IV, 448). SWIFT: "Sophistry" (286).

---

[32] Lodge, 276-277.

Swift labels "knaves, cowards, and rakes" (288) the disaffected English nobles, army officers, and Churchmen who came to Holland early in 1687 to advise William to be ready to act. Among them was Lord John Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, who, Burnet writes, "had no fortune to set up on: this put him on all the methods of acquiring one" (IV, 486). Swift ignores Burnet's carefully-worded statement, with its veiled meaning, to give his own frank opinion of Churchill: "A composition of perfidiousness and avarice" (288). In Swift's History of the Four Last Years of the Queen, he exposes Churchill's venal motives for continuing the war with France and thwarting the peace negotiations.[33] Scholars are interested in Burnet's treatment of Churchill, leader of the victorious allied armies in the War of the Spanish Succession. In 1691 William dismissed him from court for his intrigues with France to place the Pretender on the English throne. Miss Foxcroft discovered that in Burnet's original version of his History, written soon after the incident, he gave the true account of Churchill's disgrace and further stated that William himself had told him that he dismissed

---

[33] Prose Writings, VII, 7.

Churchill for Jacobite treachery; but in 1704, when Burnet revised his History, Miss Foxcroft found he had softened his earlier comments and had omitted any mention of his public vices, because by then Churchill had left the Tories and joined the Whigs.[34] In the published History, Burnet blames Churchill's dismissal on the intimacy between Princess Anne and Lady Churchill. William's failure to provide Princess Anne with a private income had prompted her to ask Parliament to grant her a stipend. William was offended by Anne's petition and blamed Lady Churchill for instigating it. The unpleasantness that resulted alienated William from Churchill and caused William to dismiss him (V, 577-578).

In a later work Miss Foxcroft gave another reason why Burnet changed the original passages. After their dismissal from court, the Churchills continued their intimacy with Princess Anne and her circle. Here they met Burnet, who was preceptor for Anne's only surviving child, the Duke of Gloucester, who died in 1700. Churchill's charm and seductive intellect won Burnet's admiration. After Churchill's victory at Blenheim in 1704, both he and Godolphin left the moderate Tories and became Whigs. When the costly victory of Malplaquet in 1709 caused the Whigs to fall from power, Churchill was soon afterward convicted of accepting a bribe from an army contractor. Anne discharged him from his post, for which her enemies abused her, claiming that her real reason was that Churchill led the party that opposed the peace upon which she had set her heart.[35]

---

[34] H. C. Foxcroft (ed.), A Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time (Oxford, 1902), pp. xviii-xx.

Swift's ingrained hatred of William was founded upon his abhorrence of William's devious diplomacy and behind-the-scene maneuvers. Burnet writes of William's last speech to the Assembly of the States General on the morning of his departure for England: "He took God to witness, he went to England with no other intentions, but those he had set out in his declaration" (IV, 496). SWIFT: "Then he was perjured; for he designed to get the crown, which he denied in the declaration" (288). In his declaration of intentions, William set forth the violations of the laws of England, the grievances, and their attempted remedies. He promised to seek redress for these violations and evils in a legally elected Parliament, to preserve the Church of England, to endeavor to unite those divided from it, to allow freedom of conscience to all in religion, and to refer to Parliament the inquiry into the queen's delivery and abide by its decision.

Once William was in England, and while Parliament debated the disposition of the throne, he again stated his position. BURNET: "He said, he came over, being invited, to save the nation: he had now brought together a free and true representative of the kingdom: he left it to them to do what they thought best for the good of the kingdom: and, when things were once settled, he should be well satisfied to go back to Holland again" (IV, 518).

---

[35] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. 307-449 *passim*.

SWIFT: "Did he tell the truth?" (292). Swift points to the falsehood in William's statement. Burnet continues with William's further pronouncements: "He would not be regent . . . . they must look out for some other person for that post" (IV, 519). Swift now has his inning: "Was not this a plain confession of what he came for?" (292). William refused to allow his wife to rule singly, with his position but that of a subordinate. Rather than accept any such humiliation, he prepared to return to Holland. William did, however, assert that "he thought the issue of Princess Anne should be preferred, in the succession, to any issue he might have by any other wife than the Princess" (IV, 519). SWIFT: "A great concession truly" (292). William's self-denial is presumptuous, for William fathered no children; his precarious health and his twisted, dwarfish body may have deprived him of this role. Swift is certain William was making no concession, magnanimous or petty.

A great diversity of opinion arose as Parliament debated the ticklish problem of who should rule England. Most of the Lords, together with about a third of the Commons, and nearly all the clergy were opposed to setting up a new king. They would have preserved the lineal descent by establishing a regency, with James the ruler in name only (IV, 513). SWIFT: "And it was certainly much the best expedient" (291). When Burnet passes on to another proposal, made by those who held to the contract theory of government, which bound the king to defend and govern his subjects according to law, in return for their obedience and service (IV, 514), Swift interposes: "I am of this party, and yet I would have been for a regency" (291).

Because Parliament was predominantly Whig, the outcome of the debates was inevitable: the Whig principles of contract, religious toleration, and Parliamentary superiority prevailed. The only solution was to proclaim William and Mary joint sovereigns, with the actual authority resting solely in William. They were rulers by act of Parliament; they were not the rightful sovereigns by hereditary principle.

When we assess Swift's marginal attacks on Burnet's account of William, we find them justifiable. Swift's statements about William's character, his connivance to get the throne, his violation of his declaration, and his usurpation all stand. That Burnet entered early into William's plans and willingly lent him his assistance is recorded in Burnet's own words.

Swift's marginal commentaries directed at Burnet's religious and political positions reveal that Swift believed Burnet maliciously biased against High Churchmen and the Stuarts, which caused him to favor Dissenters, Cromwell, and Commonwealth, to distort the facts about the Stuarts so that their misdeeds appeared even blacker, to accuse the High Church and the Tories of Jacobitism, and to be blind to the shoddy methods of William of Orange. Swift would not countenance Burnet's tolerant Low Church Anglicanism; for that reason he misunderstood Burnet's attitude toward Dissent. Likewise Swift failed to grasp the significance of Burnet's political Erastianism and his rejection of physical resistance to authority; for that reason he misinterpreted Burnet's attitude toward Cromwell and Commonwealth. Swift refused to acknowledge that Burnet had clung to passive obedience, despite his personal suffering under Charles II's tyranny; nor would Swift credit Burnet for his role in saving England from a Catholic king.

CHAPTER IV

THE MARGINALIA AS A REFLECTION OF SWIFT'S AND BURNET'S DIFFERENCES IN LITERARY TEMPERAMENT AND HISTORICAL METHOD

Swift abused not only Burnet's Low Church Anglicanism, his Whig politics, and his behind-the-scene dealings with William of Orange, but also his literary technique and his historical method. Swift ridiculed Burnet's rhetoric: he pointed to his sloppy handling of language, his crude expressions, his bungled constructions, his inadequate vocabulary, and his lack of literary taste and judgment. Even more damaging were his attacks on Burnet's historical method: he accused Burnet of lying, of suppressing the truth, of repeating unauthenticated information, of unsound argument, of dwelling too much on the affairs of Scotland, and of lacking historical objectivity. Most injurious of Swift's marginal attacks on Burnet's historical method were his indictments of Burnet for a feigned modesty that disguised supreme egotism, for a spurious delicacy that veiled prurience, and for deceit and betrayal that were but villainous treachery.

Swift's marginalia that deride Burnet's style are in the vein of his Short Remarks on Bishop Burnet's History, in which he belabored Burnet's rough treatment of language, his vulgarities of diction, his "Scotch" expressions, and his limited, overworked diction. But this was not the first time Swift had objected to Burnet's mode of writing. Years earlier, in his Preface to

Burnet's introduction to the third volume of his History of the Reformation, Swift had urged Burnet to mend his style, because the "Rhetorical Flowers" he strived for were but "Bunches of Thistles."[1]

Swift's marginalia directed at Burnet's style strike at both his diction and syntax. Swift tosses an ironic barb, "Dignity of expression" (266), at Burnet's fondness for the verb "clap" (I, 16), which in that age could mean "to imprison with little formality or delay."[2] Swift comments similarly (274) on "cut out" (II, 193), when Burnet uses it in the sense of "inclined" or "having a talent." Swift jeers "A noble epithet" (271), when Burnet calls a pulpit orator's language "pye-balled" (II, 131), a word Swift may consider appropriate for the color of mottled-coated beasts, but not a preacher's rhetoric. "In the lurch" (III, 240) Swift mocks as "True sublime" (276); "married to a fortune" (IV, 460) is "a phrase of the rabble" (287); "a very Great Beauty" (II, 139), descriptive of Charles II's mistress, is "A pretty phrase" (271); "big belly" (II, 212), a metaphor for the Dutch Princess Royal's pregnancy, is "A pretty contrast" (274).

Swift replies to one of Burnet's threadbare phrases: "He can vary a phrase; set up for a maxim, and lay down for a maxim" (275). Swift points to Burnet's gaming metaphors: "run of success," "above board," and "tables turned" (II, 214; III, 293; III, 385). Swift scorns Burnet's

---

[1] Prose Writings, IV, 82-83.

[2] OED.

"Scottishness" in "was cast" (III, 288) and "liker" (344). In mock seriousness Swift translates: "Anglice, was found guilty" (278); "Anglice, more like" (280). Swift questions "piousest" (II, 161): "Is that Scotch?" (272). When Burnet passes off as "Irish words" the ballad lyric, "lero, lero lilibulero" (IV, 502), Swift notes Burnet's linguistic confusion: "They are not Irish words, but better than Scotch" (289).

Swift's most stinging remark about Burnet's clumsy groping for words is his reply to Burnet's praise of Paradise Lost. BURNET: ". . . Paradise Lost, in which there is a nobleness both of contrivance and execution, that, though he affected to write in blank verse without rhyme, and made many new and rough words, yet it was esteemed the beautifullest and perfectest poem that ever was writ, at least in our [Swift's underlining] language" (II, 107). SWIFT: "A mistake, for it is in English" (270). Swift quibbles (273) with Burnet's use of "droll," when Burnet calls the Restoration poet Andrew Marvell "the liveliest droll of the age" (II, 176) for his rollicking satire, The Rehearsal Transpros'd. Burnet's usage is acceptable; it is Swift who is unfamiliar with the word when used as a noun to mean "a funny or waggish fellow."[3] Burnet's feeble diction is apparent in his use of "good," to describe the Earl of Rochester's literary skill: "He has a very good pen, but speaks not gracefully (II, 174). Swift is the innocent persona in his comment, "I suppose it was of gold or silver" (273).

---

[3] OED.

Burnet frequently beclouds his meaning by using a pronoun without a specific referent. Where Burnet's carelessness allows an absurd interpretation, Swift takes advantage of it. Typical is Burnet's account of the Prince of Orange's visit to Charles II when the prince sought the king's payment of a long-standing debt and his assistance in gaining the statholdership of Holland. During their conversation the king condemned the Protestants and admitted his Catholicism. BURNET: "The Prince told me, that he never spake of this till after his death [Swift's underlining]" (II, 185). SWIFT: "That is, his own death" (273). Burnet's meaning is lost in a tangle of pronouns when he writes of Lord Hyde's intervention to restore the Earl of Sunderland to James's grace: "Upon that Lord Halifax and he [Hyde] fell to be in ill terms: for he hated Lord Sunderland beyond expression, though he had married his sister" (III, 348). SWIFT: "Who married whose sister?" (280) In Burnet's sermon to the House of Commons in which he exposed the cruelties of Catholicism, he "aggravated, though very truly [Swift's underlining], the danger of falling under the power of that religion" (III, 320). Swift's retort, "A Bull" (279), points to Burnet's self-contradiction in his conjuring an "exaggerated truth." Swift again makes sport of Burnet's lack of control of the idiom in his account of Charles's amours. The Duke of Buckingham promoted a woman from the court of Louis XIV to replace the Duchess of Cleveland in the king's affection. Burnet's gauche recital concludes: "The Duke . . . intended to put her on the king [Swift's underlining]" II, 224. "Surely he means the contrary" (275), comments

Swift, enjoying a bawdy jest at Burnet's expense.

Burnet's ear was insensitive to repetition of words. SWIFT: "Four thats in one line" (272), and "Was, was, was, was" (275). When Burnet shifts back and forth in time, with no regard for consistency in tense, Swift notes: "Think, thought, thought, think, thought" (269). A spate of short, choppy sentences of unvaried construction (II, 203) provokes Swift's "Pretty jumping periods" (274). Typical of Burnet's lumbering style, lacking polish or deftness, is his statement about Charles II: "The great art of keeping him long was, the being easy, and the making everything easy to him" (II, 61). SWIFT: 'Eloquence" (268).

When Burnet attempts to leaven his commentary with humor, Swift is not amused. In Burnet's account of the Meal-tub Plot, a Papist hoax that fizzled before it could disgrace the Presbyterians, Dangerfield, the instigator, "a subtle and dexterous man, who . . . in particular was a false coiner, undertook now to coin a plot . . ." (III, 315). Swift dismisses Burnet's attempt at humor with an ironic "Witty" (279). Burnet describes the Crown's torture of Scottish Covenanters, to wring their confessions of treason. Two prisoners who confessed when subjected to thumb screws caused several more to be arrested "upon what was thus screwed out of these two persons" (III, 379). SWIFT: "Witty the second time (282). Burnet's pun was probably unintentional.

Because Swift believed Burnet had no literary taste or judgment, he refused to accept the few literary opinions Burnet expressed. We have noted his caustic reply to Burnet's remarks on Paradise Lost. He further scorns Burnet's criticism of the writings of the court wits. BURNET: "Sedley . . . was not so correct as Lord Dorset, nor so sparkling as Lord Rochester" (II, 179-180). SWIFT: "No better a critic in wit than in style" (273).

Swift's concern for language and style was in keeping with his own reforming spirit, his negative philosophy of history, and the prevailing linguistic attitudes of the Restoration and eighteenth century. Swift wrote two essays on linguistic propriety, one for the Tatler of September 28, 1710, and a second, published as a separate tract two years later. In the first, Swift assumed the *persona* of an anonymous letter writer to Isaac Bickerstaff (probably Richard Steele) and urged him, as an official censor, to publish an Index Expurgatorius that would banish linguistic corruptions from common usage. Swift named such "barbarisms" as word abbreviations ("pozz" for "positive," "rep" for "reply," "mob" for the unwieldy Latin borrowing "*mobile vulgus*"); he singled out words invented by "some pretty fellows" ("banter," "bamboozle"); he listed hackneyed phrases. These, said Swift, were false refinements and should be banished.[4]

Two years later, in A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue, Swift stated his rigid linguistic theories more fully. His negative philosophy of history that denied progress and regarded change as decay caused him to believe that linguistic changes also indicated a deteriorating civilization. To counter the rising tide of barbarism, Swift wanted a permanent language. He claimed that the English language had improved from the time of Elizabeth to the outbreak of the Civil Wars in 1642, but that barbarisms began to creep in with the Commonwealth. As had Evelyn, Dryden, and Defoe before him, Swift, too, advocated the establishment of an English academy to refine and codify the language for all time. In this essay, as in his earlier piece for the Tatler, Swift examined the clipped words, the contracted verbs, and the voguish words of the town set. With his plea for an academy, he mingled his effusive flattery of Harley, Earl of Oxford. Swift concluded that a standardized, fixed language was necessary to preserve written records.[5]

---

[4] Prose Writings, II, 173-177.

Swift's linguistic theories were those of the prescriptivist lexicographers and grammarians of the eighteenth century. As the middle class continued to rise in prominence, it became ever more anxious about "correctness" in speech as a means to bolster its social confidence. Unlike the twentieth century, which is coming to recognize that usage alone determines language, the eighteenth century looked upon dictionaries and grammars as the arbiters of language. Dr. Johnson's Dictionary (1755) satisfied the need for an authoritarian standard in vocabulary, and Bishop Robert Lowth's A

---

[5] This essay is one of the few which Swift signed as author. Davis maintained Swift did so because he wanted the Tories credited with the merit of founding an academy (Prose Writings, IV, xi-xii, 5-21).

Short Introduction to English Grammar (1762) did the same for syntax. Just as Johnson had taken the prescriptivist position and had professed to set the standard of meaning, spelling, and accent of all English words in accepted usage, Lowth set the pattern for the normative, prescriptive grammarians, who attempted to eliminate the corruptions of language and give it permanent form by obeying the laws of logic, etymology, and Latin analogy. Lowth's grammar, so widely acclaimed that it went through twenty-two editions in the eighteenth century, triggered an avalanche of imitations. Where the first half of the century had seen the publication of fewer than fifty grammars, the second half witnessed more than two hundred new titles, almost all of them modelled on Lowth. The prescriptivists failed to understand that usage rarely follows logic, that each language is unique in its structure and development, and that neither Latin or any other "universal" language can serve as a pattern to which other languages must conform.[6]

Swift's prescriptivist linguistic theories were neither revolutionary nor original. They were lucid, concrete expressions of the prevailing linguistic temper. Although Swift's plea intermixed with panegyric did not bring an English academy, and his prescriptivist yearnings for a codified language were discarded by later scholars who realized the futility of legislating language, Swift's concern for purity, precision, and decorum did influence the development of his own admirable prose style. It is small wonder that Swift abominated Burnet's prose style, for Swift's own was soundly structured, clear, concise, energetic, and agile. Sir William Temple was Swift's mentor in rhetoric. Ehrenpreis said that Swift took over "the essential qualities of Temple's style and transfigured it through his violence, his wit, and his irony." He further commended Swift's gift of phrase-making, his "humble, Bunyanesque metaphors," his "startling analogies," his "crisp, nervous, aphoristic talent," and his literary effectiveness that lay not in his vocabulary, but in his syntax.[7]

---

[6] Albert C. Baugh, A History of the English Language (2d ed.; New York, 1963), pp. 306-355; Stuart Robertson and Frederic G. Cassidy, The Development of Modern English (2d ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1954), pp. 335-344.

When we turn to Swift's opinions of Burnet's historical method, we find that he repeatedly charged Burnet with lying or withholding the full truth. Typical of such accusations are Swift's marginal comments upon the Rye House Plot of 1683, the abortive attempt on the lives of the king and his brother James, Duke of York. Among those convicted of treason and executed were Lord Russell, Burnet's intimate friend, whose innocence Burnet staunchly asserted, and Baillie of Jerviswood, Burnet's maternal cousin, who denied any part in the plot. Burnet writes that when the king questioned Baillie if he "had been in any consultation with the Scottish lords or others in Scotland, Baillie faltered at this, for his conscience restrained him from lying [Swift's underlining]" (III, 358). SWIFT: "The author and his cousins could not tell lies, but they could plot" (281). Here

---

[7] Swift, I, 176-181.

Swift's fanaticism drives him to implicate Burnet in the Covenanters' treason, an accusation that Burnet's biographers and a nineteenth century historian have repudiated.[8]

Burnet's playing the wronged innocent draws Swift's protests. Burnet insists that his anti-Catholic sermon in November 1684 was not a personal attack on the king, and for that reason he had no grounds for dismissing him from his pulpit at the Rolls Chapel (III, 386). SWIFT: "I doubt that" (283). Swift also claims Burnet lies in order to feign selflessness and magnanimity, especially when Burnet reflects on James's flight from London as William's invasion army advanced on the capital. BURNET: "I was affected with this dismal reverse of the fortune of a great Prince, more than I think fit to express" (IV, 506). SWIFT: "Or than I will believe" (290). Once William was secure in London, Parliament debated who should occupy the throne. Burnet refused to support the proposal for William to rule alone, since it would have nullified Mary's pledge to her husband and the agreement both of them had reached in Holland, and, at the same time, would have made William appear jealous and greedy in the eyes of the English. Burnet claims he asked to be relieved of further service to William so that he might actively oppose the proposal. BURNET: "I desired to be disengaged, that I might be free to oppose this proposition with all the strength and credit I had. He [William] answered me, that I might desire that when I saw a step made: but till then he wished me to stay where I was" (IV, 518). SWIFT: Is all this true?" (292). Swift was unwilling to believe that Burnet would have disengaged himself from the prince, or that he would have jeopardized his own position to save Mary's honor.

---

[8] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. 5-10; Leopold von Ranke, A History of England (6 vols.; Oxford, 1875), VI, 46-47.

Burnet's fondness for gossipy anecdotes and his proneness to record unauthenticated information irritated Swift. Burnet cites Colonel Titus, who assured Burnet "that he had from King Charles the first's own mouth" learned that James I's son was poisoned by a hireling of the Earl of Somerset (I, 4). SWIFT: "Titus was the greatest Rogue in England" (266). Swift scorns Burnet's third-hand information about the Duchess of Orleans (274), which Burnet learned from "a person of distinction, who had it from some who were well informed of the matter" (II, 202). More third-hand information appears in Burnet's account of the trial of Algernon Sidney, accused in the Rye House Plot. A sheriff wept when Sidney protested the injustice of the court's death sentence. BURNET: "He told it to a person, from whom Tillotson had it, who told it to me" (III, 372). SWIFT: "Admirable authority" (281). The most notorious of Burnet's stories that Swift condemned as spurious, and "that would only become an old woman in a chimney-corner,"[9] was his account of the Prince of Wales's birth, which Burnet later retracted.

---

[9] Prose Writings, V, 183.

Swift disliked Burnet's "folksy" informality and his tendency to slip bits of trivia into his History. Burnet indulges this fondness when he writes of the Scots' crowning the son of the martyred Charles I. BURNET: "Upon the king's death the Scots proclaimed his son king, and sent over Sir George Wincam, that married my great aunt [Swift's underlining], to treat with him while he was in the isle of Jersey" (I, 32). SWIFT: "Was that the reason he was sent?" (268).

Swift accused Burnet of "wrong arguing" and "wrong weak reasoning" in his statements against the constitutionality of the Act Recissory for Scotland. Here we find that Swift's own bias against Scots and Dissenters had warped his judgment, in that Burnet's position is the consensus of later historians. Nor will we accept Swift's accusations of wrong argument in Burnet's account of the arrangements for the marriage of William of Orange to Mary. Lord Danby, Charles II's councillor, urged the king to get the Duke of York's consent to the marriage, for Danby "thought it was the Duke's interest to have it done . . . if they saw his daughter given to one that was at the head of the Protestant interest, it would very much soften those apprehensions . . . . With all this the King was convinced" (III, 272). SWIFT: "Then how was the King for bringing in Popery?" (277). Swift fails to recall that it was not then known that Mary, the Protestant daughter of the Duke of York, and William, her Non-Conformist husband, would ascend the throne. Further, Mary was eligible only after her father, and then, only if he did not father a son. For these reasons, Charles might consider his Catholic preferences sufficiently catered to in no more than the succession of the Duke of York, a declared Catholic. It is Swift who is guilty of "wrong arguing," because he views these events from the vantage point of sixty years' hindsight.

But many of Swift's charges of inconsistent or unsound argument are justified. Swift's comment, "Sophistry" (286), on Burnet's pains to justify William's intervention in England for any other reason than to obtain the throne (IV, 448), is but one example; another is Burnet's presentation of the debates in the Convention Parliament on who should rule after William had driven James off the throne. When this Whig-dominated body declared that James, by his withdrawal, had abdicated, the Lords of the Parliament debated the word "abdicate" and added to the meaning the Commons had given it. Burnet objects to the importance of these debates. BURNET: "But this was a critical dispute: and it scarce became the greatness of that assembly, or the importance of the matter" (IV, [illegible] SWIFT: "It was a very material point" (291). Swift insists th[illegible]ity of William's succession depended on the interpretation of James's vacating the throne. Burnet's only concern was whether the throne could be declared vacant. BURNET: It was urged, that by the law, the King did never die; but that with the last breath of the dying king the regal authority went to the next heir" (IV, 516). SWIFT: "This is certainly true" (291). Swift conforms to the ancient belief in lineal descent that insured the continuation of monarchy. Burnet then passes to the argument of those for the uninterrupted lineal succession, which was, that if the king had abdicated, the throne was in that instant filled by the next heir, a position substantiated by the national oath of allegiance to the king, which was addressed not only to him, but to his heirs and successors. BURNET: "Those who insisted on the abdication said, that if the King dissolved the tie between him and his subjects to himself, he dissolved their tie likewise to his posterity" (IV, 516). SWIFT: "This is sophistry" (291). Swift is unwilling to support any argument that would destroy the theory of lineal descent.

Swift's anti-Scots bias made him rankle at Burnet's Scottishness. In his Short Remarks on Bishop Burnet's History Swift hit Burnet's Scottish expressions and his devoting so much of the work to Scottish affairs, that it would have been more appropriately entitled "A History of Scotland during the author's time, with some digressions relating to England,"[10] Swift detested Scotland, the stronghold of Presbytery and Dissent; he abused the Scots for bringing Charles to his final disaster in the Second Civil War. We have observed Swift's fanaticism in his accusing Burnet of favoring Dissenters, supporting Covenanters, and of allying himself with the Johnstons, of which Burnet is innocent. Swift also abused Burnet's Scottishness. Burnet is "A Scotch Dog" (276) for revealing his private conversation with Lauderdale that brought Lauderdale's impeachment (III, 248); it is "A lie of a Scot" (291) when Burnet implicates Temple with the Irish Papist Tyrconnell

---

[10] Prose Writings, V, 183-184.

(IV, 511); Burnet is a "Vile Scot" (294) for telling of the Duke of Ormonde's treason (VII, 891).

At times Swift needled Burnet's Scottishness with less emotion and anger. Some of the most maliciously witty of Swift's marginalia are aimed at the Scots' traditional association with parsimony. Burnet explains James I's sequestering a portion of the tithes to provide each parish in his Anglican establishment in Scotland with thirty pounds a year, a provision which Burnet believed liberal, since it was "equal in value to thrice that sum in the southern parts of England" (I, 3-4). SWIFT: "Scotch pounds, I suppose" (266). Swift, of course, does not consider the sum as generous as Burnet would have us believe. Swift again hits the Scots' alleged niggardliness when Burnet tells of Lauderdale's prosecution of the Presbyterians' conventicles, that forced many of the ministers out of their benefices and touched off a wave of retaliation. Burnet devised a plan that he believed would have prevented the ejected ministers from holding conventicles and, in turn, would have helped calm the rebellious Scots. It consisted of "putting all the ousted ministers by couples into parishes; so that instead of wandering about the country, to hold conventicles in all places, they might be fixed to a certain abode, and every one might have the half of a benefice" (II, 226). SWIFT: "A Scottish project: instead of feeding fifty, you starve one hundred" (276).

Swift's intolerance of Burnet's concern for Scottish history is first voiced when Burnet breaks off his narration at the beginning of Charles I's reign to relate events in Scotland: "I turn now to the affairs of Scotland, which are but little known" (I, 10). SWIFT: "Not worth knowing" (266). Swift slaps Burnet for his account of Lord Balmerinoch's trial, at which Burnet's father testified in Balmerinoch's defense and preserved an official copy of the petition, pleadings, and testimonies, "indeed a very noble piece, full of curious matter" (I, 14). Swift's single-word comment, "Puppy" (266), is but another jab at Burnet's Scottishness, which caused him to value the records so highly. Swift believed that Balmerinoch, despite the king's pardon, had plotted to undermine the king's prerogative.

Swift further abused Burnet's historical method by claiming that he lacked historical objectivity. Swift believed that Burnet's prejudices had destroyed his objectivity, but that even without his Low Church Whiggishness, Burnet lacked sound historical judgment, a perceptiveness in analyzing character and event. Swift finds Burnet's blind spot in character judgment in his appraisals of the Earl of Arlington and the Duke of Buckingham, both members of Charles II's cabal, his inner circle of advisers in the early years of his reign. Of Arlington, who as secretary of state started an opposition group to Chancellor Clarendon, Burnet observes: "His parts were solid, but not quick" (II, 68). SWIFT: "They were very quick" (268). Arlington, who was most responsible for Clarendon's fall from power, intrigued to further Catholic interests at court. It was he who instructed William Temple to negotiate the Triple Alliance of 1668, while at the same time he himself negotiated the secret Treaty of Dover, which undid Temple's hard-won diplomacy by enslaving England to France. Arlington helped arrange the marriage of William and Mary, and in the last years of Charles's reign, when Danby fell from favor and Charles dismissed his entire privy council in the ensuing shake-up, Arlington managed to retain the king's favor and gain a seat on the king's new council.[11]

Another member of the anti-Clarendon group was the Duke of Buckingham, whom Burnet describes as lacking morals and virtues: "He was true to nothing, for he was not true to himself. He had no steadiness nor conduct: he could keep no secret, nor execute any design without spoiling it" (II, 69). Swift comments on the first part: "No consequence"; on the last: "Nonsense" (268). Buckingham led the extremist Protestant Dissenters who frustrated the Catholic Duke of York's succession by supporting the claim of the Duke of Monmouth, the king's illegitimate son. Upon the king's rejection of this plan, Buckingham pressed Parliament to pass a law that would have allowed the king to divorce his barren queen and contract a second marriage that might give him a legitimate heir. Buckingham's efforts came to nothing. When the king dismissed him in 1674, he joined the opposition group that had gathered around the Earl of Shaftesbury.[12]

It is not surprising that Burnet disapproved of the nefarious Buckingham, yet Swift's objections to Burnet's appraisal do not mean that Swift approved of Buckingham, any more than does Swift's touting Arlington's "quickness" indicate that he approved of him. Swift possibly feels Burnet allowed neither Arlington or Buckingham any measure of success. Swift's distaste for devious political maneuvering would have turned him against both these men's shady actions; yet Swift refuses to write off as incompetent bunglers two men who kept their ships so long afloat in troubled waters. When Quintana discussed Swift as satirist, he insisted that Swift was not a bitter man "who saw only man's ineptitude and failure." His comic sense kept him in a region lying between love and hatred.[13]

---

[11] Clark, pp. 54-76; Lodge, pp. 66-161 passim.

[12] Clark, pp. 72-73; Lodge, pp. 66-146 passim.

Swift's reaction to Burnet's character analysis was not always this temperate. Burnet's account of Archbishop Laud's career is exemplary for its fairness (I, 30), yet Swift cries out: "All this is full of malice and ill Judgment" (268). Likewise we must refuse to take seriously Swift's derogatory comment about Robert Boyle, since Swift's bias against science warped his judgment. Burnet's fondness for science is apparent in the considerable space he devotes to the founders of the Royal Society in 1633. Of Boyle, Burnet's personal friend, he writes: "He neglected his person, despised the world, and lived abstracted from all pleasures, designs, and interests" (II, 132). SWIFT: "Boyle was a very silly writer" (271). Boyle, philosopher, scientist, and co-inventor of the air pump, might well be the prototype of Swift's Laputans, the wildly impractical scientists whom Gulliver encountered on his third voyage:

---

[13] Swift: An Introd., p. 39.

> It seems, the Minds of these People are so taken up with intense Speculations, that they neither can speak, or attend to the Discourses of others, without being rouzed by some external Taction upon the Organs of Speech and Hearing; for which Reason, those persons who are able to afford it, always keep a Flapper, (the Original is Climenole) in their Family, as one of their Domesticks; nor ever walk abroad or make Visits without him. And the Business of this Officer is, when two or more persons are in Company, gently to strike with his Bladder the Mouth of him who is to speak, and the Right Ear of him or them to whom the Speaker addresseth himself.[14]

On the same voyage the "Projectors" of the Academy of Lagado are Swift's humorous distortions for all scholars devoted to visionary, speculative schemes.[15] Kathleen Williams believes that Swift intended the Laputans to represent all men who reject the impressions of the senses and the practical concerns of the world; the projects of the Academy of Lagado stand for distorted values and a perversion of things from their proper purpose.[16] Quintana attributed Swift's "supreme contempt for science" to his anti-intellectualism that caused him to regard all speculation, whether political, scientific, or religious, as a waste of time.[17] More recently Ehrenpreis has surveyed the operations of the Dublin Philosophical Society, founded while Swift was a student at Trinity College, and has found that its projects foreshadow a number of episodes or images in Swift's writings: "astronomical researches which anticipate Laputa, excremental or animal experiments like those at the Academy of Lagado, a toy fleet like the one Gulliver would steal from Blefuscu, a study of spittle such as Swift was to deride in A Tale of a Tub, and even a flying island."[18]

---

[14] Prose Writings, XI, 159.

[15] Ibid., 179-192.

[16] Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise (Lawrence, Kansas, 1958), pp. 168-173.

[17] Mind and Art, p. 55.

Yet the character appraisal to which Swift protested most vigorously was Burnet's unfavorable portrait of William Temple. Burnet describes Temple as a vain man, who had good judgment in governmental affairs, but in nothing else, and who "thought religion was fit only for the mob . . . . He was a corrupter of all that came near him. And he delivered himself up wholly to study, ease, and pleasure" (III, 251). SWIFT: "Sir William Temple was a man of virtue, to which Burnet was a stranger" (276).

Burnet attributed historical events to divine intervention, a naivete Swift found unbearable, since he believed men made history. Burnet regarded the deliverance of William's invasion fleet from a storm at sea as Providential. BURNET: "We looked upon our escape as a mark of God's great care of us, who though he had not changed the course of the winds and seas in our favour, yet had preserved us while we were in such apparent danger, beyond what could have been imagined" (IV, 496). Burnet's mawkish sentiments provoke Swift to comment with mock solemnity:

---

[18] Swift, I, 79.

"Then still it must be a miracle" (288).

At times Burnet makes statements that would compromise even his fondest reader's opinion of his historical judgment. He begins his account of the Revolution: "I come now to the year 1688, which proved memorable, and produced an unheard of revolution [Swift's underlining]" (IV, 461). SWIFT: "The Devil's in that, sure all Europe heard of it" (287). Either Burnet's lack of precision with words, his inability to know the *mot juste*, caused him to use "unheard," or his historical judgment was completely suspended. The passage remains baffling.

The most damaging of all Swift's attacks on Burnet's historical method--even more than were his challenges of truth and reliability or his charges of unsound arguing, of devoting too much space to Scotland, and of lacking historical objectivity--were his accusations that Burnet concealed dark motives behind a cloak of false modesty and fastidiousness. Further, Swift read into Burnet's own recital of his thoughts and acts a self-confession of deceit and perfidy. Swift resented Burnet's professed modesty and self-effacement; he believed that they were but stratagems to disguise a supreme egotism. Swift finds this fault when Burnet writes of his advancement to a professorship: "At this time the University of Glasgow, to whom the choice of professor of divinity does belong, chose me, though unknown to them all, to be professor there. There was no sort of artifice or management to bring this about: it came of themselves: and they did it without any recommendation of any person whatsoever"

(II, 193). SWIFT: "Modest" (274). Swift found a similar fault with his account of his activities in London in 1673, when his relations with Lauderdale were near the breaking-point. Although Burnet was still court chaplain, his anti-Catholic tracts had so annoyed the king that he urged Burnet to return to Scotland. Burnet, fearing Lauderdale's wrath and imprisonment if he returned, stayed in London. Burnet writes of these anxious months: "I preached in many of the churches of London, and was so well received, that it was probable I might be accepted of in any that was to be disposed of by a popular election [Swift's underlining]" (III, 247). SWIFT: "Much to his honor" (276). Burnet's activities in Holland preceding William's invasion caused William to ignore James's demand to banish Burnet. William insisted that because Burnet had become a naturalized Dutch citizen, he had the protection of the Dutch courts. Burnet records James's reaction to William's stand: "The King took the matter very ill; and said, it was an affront to him, and a just cause of war" (IV, 462). SWIFT: "Vain Fop" (287). When Holland refused to deliver up Burnet, the wrathful James offered five thousand pounds to anyone who would kill him. Burnet describes his feelings during this perilous time: "I never possessed my own soul in a more perfect calm, and in a clearer cheerfulness of spirit, than I did during all those threatenings, and the apprehension that others were in concerning me" (IV, 463). SWIFT: "A modest account of his own magnanimity" (287).

Swift derided Burnet's moralizing. "Stupid moralist" (272) is Swift's rejoinder to Burnet's preachy tone in his account of Clarendon's fall (II, 173). Swift scoffs, too, when Burnet credits himself with obtaining Mary's willing acquiescence to her husband's assuming the authority of rule (285; IV, 440).

Swift found Burnet's avowed delicacy spurious and his protests against indecency hypocritical, especially when Burnet raised indelicate matters, hinted at their nature, and then dropped them, claiming that propriety forbade their further discussion. Swift maintained that Burnet's "delicacy" was but a cover-up for prurience. Swift stood for the unabashed, frank statement. Ehrenpreis interpreted Swift's coarseness, his playing foul against fair with the human body: "It is as if he wished to appear so sure of his own piety, his continence, his modesty, his rectitude, that common prudential maxims should not apply to him. In the holiest places he could affect to sound coarse--not out of irreverence but as a demonstration that his faith was too serene for any such expressions to impugn it. When he fails to anticipate is that other worshippers may hear the coarseness without appreciating the piety."[19]

Swift unmasks what he feels is Burnet's false fastidiousness in Burnet's account of Sir Henry Vane, executed in 1662 for treason and his boldness in asserting the supremacy of Parliament. Burnet describes Vane's composure, once he knew his fate was sealed: "When he saw his death was designed, he composed himself to it, with a resolution that surprised all who knew how little of that was natural to him. Some instances of this were very extraordinary, though they cannot be mentioned with decency" (II, 108). Swift, amused at Burnet's prudishness, not only supplies the information that Burnet withheld, but italicizes it for added effrontery: "His lady conceived of him the night before his execution" (270). We have seen that Swift boldly named William's "secret vice." He further enlarges upon Burnet's cryptic insinuation that William and Mary's marriage "had been of late a little embroiled" (IV, 440), by adding: "By Mrs. Villiers, now Lady Orkney . . ." (285). Swift also reveals with devastating irony that Titus Oates's "unnatural practices, not to be named" (III, 282) and "the scandal of the worst sort [Swift's underlining]" that surrounded the Bishop of Chester (IV, 442) were "Only sodomy" (286).

---

[19] *Swift*, I, 209.

Swift roguishly adds details to Burnet's accounts that he considers already boring for their prolixity. Burnet's long account of the Rye House Plot trials undoubtedly irritated Swift, since Burnet was attacking the Crown when he minimized the conspiracy and protested the injustice of the prosecutions. Lord Essex was arrested and imprisoned but committed suicide in the Tower before he could be tried. Burnet describes how his servant found his body: "For his man, thinking he [Lord Essex] staid longer than ordinary in his closet, said, he looked through the key-hole, and there saw him lying dead" (III, 361). SWIFT: "He was on the close stool" (281).

At times Swift ridicules Burnet's pious sermonizing and points to Burnet's "double standard" of morality. When Burnet describes the wild frivolity of Charles II's court, he writes of the Duke of Buckingham's attempts to rid the king of his barren queen. When the king rejected the duke's plan to have her kidnapped, the duke then planned to lure the king away from her with new amours, one of whom was the actress Nell Gwynn. Although the king took the bait and lavished money on her, "he never treated her with the decencies [Swift's underlining] of a mistress" (II, 178). Swift asks, from behind his mask of naivete: "Pray what decencies are those?" (273) Swift is shocked that a clergyman would take such a worldly position. Burnet further adopted an attitude toward the king's marriage that is hard to understand. At Lauderdale's behest, Burnet wrote two treatises, one condoning divorce, the other polygamy, if a marriage proved unfruitful (II, 177n).

Burnet continues: "The king had another mistress . . . daughter of a clergyman, . . . never easy in an ill course, and died with a great sense of her former ill life. I was often with her [Swift's underlining] the last three months of her life" (II, 178). SWIFT: "Was she handsome then?" (273). Swift enjoys an irreverent joke over Burnet's complacent assumption that the reader might be impressed by his spiritual solicitude for the woman.

Swift found that Burnet's historical method disclosed a confession of treachery. Swift's charge that Burnet plotted treason with his Covenanting cousins has been invalidated, but Swift points to other instances wherein Burnet naively recounts activities Swift considers dishonest, wicked, or treacherous, and thus self-incriminating. Swift puts Burnet's betrayal of

Lauderdale in this category. Miss Foxcroft found that Burnet in self-defense deleted from the original version of his work several passages that dealt with his early intimacy with Lauderdale.[20] Lauderdale, who rose to become the crown's chief representative in Scotland, had left the Presbyterians and joined the king's party at the Restoration. For a time the Scots believed him a moderate; not until 1672 did he become violently oppressive of Presbytery and show the ruthlessness that Miss Foxcroft likened to that of a Turkish pasha. Burnet worked closely with Lauderdale and obtained his promise to support comprehension. Actually Lauderdale deceived both Burnet and Leighton, whom he used as his tools to establish the king's arbitrary power. In 1672, when Lauderdale stepped up his persecution of the Presbyterian coventicles, he confided to Burnet that he planned to drive the Dissenters to rebellion so that he could bring in an army of Irish Papists to cut their throats. Lauderdale became increasingly jealous of Burnet's popularity and rebuffed him when he came to Scotland to open Parliament in the fall of 1673. On the following day, when the Scots' Parliament denounced the king and his government in Scotland, Lauderdale in his wrath blamed Burnet for the censure, despite Burnet's vehement protest of innocence. In July 1674, when Burnet went to London, he found that Lauderdale had undermined him with the king. Soon the king dismissed Burnet as court chaplain and banished him from court (III, 240-241).[21] In April 1675 a Parliamentary committee questioned Burnet about his relations with Lauderdale. Burnet revealed the threat that Lauderdale had told him in confidence. When Burnet refused to discuss his part in a plan to bring a Scottish army into England, the Commons summoned him to the bar four times and threatened to take action against him, before he submitted. BURNET: "Upon this I yielded, and gave an account of the discourse formerly mentioned. They laid great weight on this, and renewed their address against duke Lauderdale" (III, 253). SWIFT: "Treacherous villain" (276). Burnet was heavily censured for his betrayal of Lauderdale. He candidly admits he had acted against his own preachment, that clergymen should not meddle in secular matters, then adds: "My love to my country, and my private friendships, carried me perhaps too far . . . " (III, 253). SWIFT: "Right" (276).

---

[20] Foxcroft, A Supplement to Burnet's History, p. xvii.

[21] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. 41-126 passim.

Swift likewise finds Burnet's advice to Bishop Lloyd a notorious lapse from decency and honesty. Late in 1680 during the trial of Turbervill, charged with treason in the Popish Plot, Bishop Lloyd might have given testimony that would have saved Turbervill's life. When Lloyd asked Burnet if he should endanger his reputation by speaking in Turbervill's defense, Burnet concurred with the opinion of other of Lloyd's friends who urged him to remain silent (III, 279). SWIFT: "Damned advice" (279).

We have previously noted that Swift accused Burnet of using jesuitical arguments in defending himself before the king's council in Lord Russell's case. It is such action as this, together with his betrayal of Lauderdale and his advice to Lloyd, each related quite ingenuously by Burnet, that causes Swift to resent Burnet's moral judgments upon others. Burnet observes that Lord Perth, whom Charles II made chancellor of Scotland, had long aspired to that post "in a most indecent manner" (III, 378). SWIFT: "Decent and indecent, very useful words to this author" (282). Swift again accuses Burnet of employing the methods of a cunning trickster to save himself after Burnet describes Lord Perth's tortures of Scottish prisoners. When Carstairs, a Presbyterian minister, yielded under torture, his confession revealed too little to convict him of treason. At this point Burnet confesses how he avoided incriminating himself when he received confidences: "I saved my self out of those difficulties by saying to all my friends, that I would not be involved in any such confidences; for as long as I thought our circumstances were such that resistance was not lawful, I thought the concealing any design in order to it was likewise unlawful; and by this means I had preserved my self" (III, 379). Burnet's pains to assure the reader that he was true to passive obedience fail to convince Swift. His comment, "Jesuitical" (282), expresses his conviction that Burnet was a deceitful meddler who had full knowledge of the plots against the king's life, and that his professed innocence was an attempt to conceal his wily maneuvers.

Swift's abuse of Burnet's historical method recalls the acerbity of Gulliver's observations on modern historians. In his third voyage, when Gulliver visits Glubbdubdrib, he questions the ghosts of historical figures of the past century and is sickened to learn "how the World has been misled by prostitute Writers . . . ." Gulliver reviles the writers of anecdotes and secret histories: "Here I discovered the Roguery and Ignorance of those who pretend to write Anecdotes, or secret History; who send so many Kings to their Graves with a Cup of Poison; will repeat the Discourse between a Prince and chief Minister, where no Witness was by; unlock the Thoughts and Cabinets of Embassadors and Secretaries of State; and have the perpetual Misfortune to be mistaken."[22]

Swift's own attempt to write formal history was The History of the Four Last Years of the Queen, an account of the negotiations leading to the Peace of Utrecht and a defense of the queen's ministerial policy. The account begins with the opening of the queen's last session of Parliament in December 1711, and ends with the ratification of the peace treaty in May 1713. Harold Williams related how Swift's own friends prevented the manuscript from reaching the press in his own lifetime. Swift's accounts of the South Sea Company, the transaction with the Dutch envoy Buys, Swift's reflections on Marlborough's personal courage, his insinuation that Prince Eugene plotted to murder Oxford, and his playing up the republican principles of the ministers were so dangerous as to make his friends fearful of the consequences to Swift. Yet when the work appeared in 1758, thirteen years after Swift's death, unlike Burnet's History, it was in the form the author would have approved.[23]

---

[22] Prose Writings, XI, 199.

In his Preface, Swift explained his reasons for writing the History. Because he anticipated that upon the Hanoverian succession, Anne and her servants would be handled maliciously and accused unjustly, he wanted "to undeceive prejudiced persons at present, as well as posterity" since he could not "suffer falsehoods to run on any longer." Swift stated his qualifications for writing the work: he was four years in the confidence of those in power; his materials were the official correspondence of England's ambassadors, secretaries of state, and the Earl of Oxford, and the state documents; he was a constant witness and observer of all that occurred, which he had duly recorded in writing. Historians who have checked Swift's work with the original documents attest to its reliability.[24]

Much as the value of Swift's work rests upon his close association with those in power and his own involvement in the events he wrote about, so it is with Burnet's work. The German historian Ranke, Burnet's most severe and hostile critic, conceded that Burnet's work was valuable for the account of those events in which he took part. Although Ranke considered much of the work a strange mixture of rumor, error, and truth, of partiality and an effort to be impartial, he valued Burnet's account of events in England and Scotland during the reign of Charles II, when Burnet was close to those in power in Church and state, especially the attempt at comprehension, the Popish Plot, and the Exclusion Bill; Ranke judged even more worthwhile Burnet's account of his stay in Holland, his confidential conversations with William and Mary, and the preparations for the Revolution. Ranke felt that the first book, which covers the period from the reign of James I to the Restoration, was but a superficial treatment of those thirty-seven years, since Burnet failed to delve deeply into affairs and related only what others had told him. Clarendon had already covered the era in his _History of the Rebellion_, which Burnet gives as his reason for passing over it lightly. Ranke considered Burnet's account of James II's reign unreliable, because Burnet was not in England and the events were told him by James's enemies, who were often untrustworthy. Certainly this was true in Burnet's account of the Prince of Wales's birth.[25]

---

[23] Prose Writings, VII, ix-xxviii.

[24] Ibid., xv, xxxiv.

Lodge, more favorable to Burnet's work than Ranke, claimed that the hostility to it stemmed from Burnet's pretense that it was history rather than memoirs. As memoirs the work was invaluable; with allowance, Lodge considered it the best record of the period.[26]

Miss Foxcroft gave us the best insight into Burnet as a historian. Her studies have enabled us to understand the complexities with which Burnet grappled as he wrote the work and which left their permanent impression on the published version. She also cleared up the reasons for the furor the work aroused and for the continuing complaints of its inaccuracy and prejudice. Miss Foxcroft explained that originally Burnet planned the work as memoirs and called it his "Secret History." He began writing it in 1683 and finished it in 1686. In 1702, after he had read Clarendon's History, which had just appeared, he decided to revise his memoirs into a formal history, patterning it upon the models of Clarendon and DeThou, by interweaving the strand of his own life with that of the events of his time. Burnet had only begun his revision when the Jacobite Charles Leslie published excerpts of a stolen copy of Burnet's work, along with a separate pamphlet in which he attacked the History as a lewd libel against Church and crown. Although he never named Burnet as the author, Leslie's virulent tract undoubtedly affected Burnet's revision, because Miss Foxcroft found that Burnet modified the passages about the reign of Charles II that Leslie had attacked. Burnet finished his revision in 1704 and soon was composing the later history. He finished the work, including a conclusion and an autobiography, in 1713, and in the two remaining years of his life revised the latter portion.

---

[25] Ranke, VI, 45-64.

[26] Lodge, p. 477.

When Miss Foxcroft compared the original drafts with their revisions in the British Museum and the Bodleian Library, she found that the revisions were an entire change of plan. Ranke, the first critic to compare the original memoir with the later version, found that the memoir was more vigorous, lucid, and less deliberately Whiggish. Miss Foxcroft noted that the author's life, the connecting thread of the original memoirs, was played down, which had resulted in a loss of unity, chronology, and structural soundness. Burnet changed his religious and political positions: he softened his diatribes against the Anglican clergy, he struck out many passages about his family, and he deleted the passages dealing with his intimacy with Lauderdale. Further, he was kinder to the Whigs in the later version; he omitted the account of Churchill's disgrace; he changed from passive obedience. Although Burnet had altered his style and corrected many errors, the work was still rough, which Miss Foxcroft attributed to Burnet's lack of literary judgment. She maintained that the revision dulled and blurred the original and made it feeble and incoherent.

Miss Foxcroft further discovered that the published work was not the text Burnet sanctioned. Burnet willed the two manuscripts of his History to his second son, also named Gilbert, with the instructions that the two sets be compared and from them an edition prepared for publication with no changes, but no sooner than six years after his death. But Gilbert, an Anglican cleric, fearing some passages would prove offensive, deleted and altered the manuscript against his father's instructions. It is not surprising that when the first volume appeared in 1724, there were accusations of omission and fraud. Likewise the second volume, which Thomas Burnet, another son, prepared for publication in 1734, was substantially altered from the father's manuscripts. Thomas further substituted his own biography of his father for the autobiography.[27]

Professor Firth placed Burnet midway between the historians and memoir-writers and rated him higher as a writer of contemporary history than as a historian. He pointed to Burnet's earlier historical works and biographies that preceded the History of His Own Time, in which Burnet developed his writing technique. In his Memoirs of the Lives and Actions of James and William Dukes of Hamilton (1678), Burnet wrote the first political biography of the modern type, that combined a narrative of a man's life with selections from his letters. His History of the Reformation of the Church of England, of which the first volume appeared in 1679, was the first work of general history to be based on historical records. Here Burnet's historical approach was original: he concentrated on the events that produced new ideas, not the persons connected with them. In 1680, in the interval between the publication of the first and second volume of this work, Burnet published Some Passages of the Life and Death of the Right Honourable John Earl of Rochester. Firth found this piece Burnet's finest as literature and best in style. His faithful rendering of the substance of the dialogues between himself and Rochester was a technique he later used in his History of His Own Time. The following year Burnet wrote the Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale, a model of Restoration biography.[28]

---

[27] Foxcroft, A Supplement to Burnet's History, pp. v-xxx.

[28] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. xi-xxvi.

Unlike De Thou, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century French historian, whose Historia sui temporis, written in Latin, was one of Burnet's models, Burnet did not in his History of His Own Time recount battles; he gave less space than De Thou to foreign affairs and the lives and writings of learned men. Burnet passed over the literature; Hobbes he mentioned slightly, Locke not at all; he did praise Paradise Lost and refer briefly to Marvell and Dryden. He discussed the Royal Society at length out of his love for science, but his fullest development was of the religious controversies and the great Churchmen of his time, and their influence on Church and state. Unlike his History of the Reformation, here Burnet concentrated on men rather than events. His purpose was moral; he hoped to show the errors of his age so that the next age might avoid them. The History of His Own Time is an educational treatise to train men for government.[29]

When the first volume of the History appeared, it was immediately attacked as untruthful. Burnet's faults were his own prejudices and his failure to sift his information and discriminate between fact and fancy. Samuel Johnson commented: "I do not believe that Burnet intentionally lied; but he was so much prejudiced that he took no pains to find out the truth. He was like a man who resolves to regulate his time by a certain watch; but will not enquire whether the watch is right or wrong."[30]

---

[29] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. xxx-xxxiii.

Firth, too, commended the historical value of Burnet's account of affairs in Scotland from 1660 to 1673, when Burnet was resident and active in Church and government, and his account of William and Mary in The Hague and in the post-Revolutionary period in England. Firth likewise found Burnet's style objectionable, but he praised its realism, especially in his sincere, elevated character sketch of Leighton, in the vivid portrayal of Lauderdale, in the affectionate portrayal of Mary, and in the truthful presentation of William's imperfections. Burnet attributed history to general causes; his thorough understanding of the religious causes of the Revolution caused him to see that overthrow as the fifth crisis in the the history of Protestantism. Beginning with the Reformation as the first crisis, Burnet believed Providence had since intervened four times and each time had raised up a figure to save Protestantism from destruction: Maurice of Saxony, Queen Elizabeth, Gustavus Adolphus, and last, William. The danger did not pass until George I's accession secured a line of Protestant kings for England. The heart of Burnet's _History of His Own Time_ is the account of the fifth crisis, which links this work with the _History of the Reformation_ and unifies Burnet's historical writings.[31]

---

[30] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

[31] _Ibid._, pp. xxxiii-xlii.

Swift's condemnation of Burnet's literary style and taste was justified, but his charges against Burnet's historical method must be examined piecemeal. Burnet's pains to minimize the seriousness of the Rye House Plot and to show the injustice of the crown's prosecutions of those charged with treason were due to Burnet's fears that the Protestant cause would be lost, if the crown could show that the Whigs, the newly-formed opposition group to the king's party, had planned to murder the king and his Catholic brother. Burnet was convinced that both Lord Russell and Essex were innocent, and it is possible Russell would have been acquitted, had not Essex's suicide in the Tower sealed his fate. When Russell received the death sentence, Burnet was shattered, because now he believed both Essex and Russell guilty. Then Burnet interviewed Russell several times in Newgate Prison before his execution and became convinced he was innocent, a position he never abandoned. What Burnet did not know was that Essex was guilty. Despite his grief over Russell's fate and his own blasted career, Burnet stayed with passive obedience.[32] Swift's further attempts to implicate Burnet in the Covenanters' treasons were due to Swift's own fanaticism. Burnet was a meddler, but never an intriguer.

Swift was right to challenge Burnet's veracity in claiming the king had no grounds for dismissing him from the Rolls pulpit. Burnet delivered many anti-Catholic sermons; he was the author of several anti-Papist tracts;

---

[32] Clarke and Foxcroft, pp. 188-198.

he had been outspoken against the king's adultery. Although Burnet was prone to repeat unauthenticated information, Swift's charges of wrong arguing do not always hold, because Swift, too, could argue wrongly, especially about the Act Recissory and Charles's leanings toward Popery. Swift rightly rejected Burnet's justification of William's usurpation; he scoffed at Burnet's egotism for asserting that Providence intervened to save William's invasion fleet. Yet Swift's fanatical hatred of all things Scottish caused him to miss the importance of Burnet as a chronicler of Scottish history. Swift refused to admit that Burnet, a native and resident of Scotland active in Church and state during the first thirteen years of the Restoration, was as well qualified to write the history of Scotland in this era as was Swift to write that of Queen Anne's reign.

Burnet's egotism was at times insufferable, but Swift's own prejudice and lack of historical objectivity prevented his crediting Burnet for his greatest accomplishment, his helping to save the Protestant succession. He insisted on the dual occupancy of the throne and managed the problem of Mary's subordinate position, which made a Dutch Calvinist acceptable to the English; he prevented William from declaring for Presbytery in England; he preserved both Episcopacy and toleration of Dissent in the Revolutionary Settlement. Swift is right, however, to point to Burnet's hypocritical delicacy; his savoring racy tidbits indicates a prurience that jars with his facade of propriety and the virtuous tone of his History.

Burnet's betrayal of Lauderdale, his advice to Lloyd that may have executed an innocent man, and his evasive answers to the king's council about Russell suggest deceit. Burnet's carefully-worded statement of his refusal to listen to treasonable plots and his admission of his guarded conduct are a confession that he knew of the designs against the king. Swift's accusation that Burnet not only knew of the treasons, but also participated in them, must be denied. Not until he entered into William's invasion plans did Burnet conspire to overthrow the monarch, and then only after James had subverted the Constitution and the laws of England.

CHAPTER V

THE MARGINALIA AS RHETORIC

Swift never intended his marginalia in Burnet's History of His Own Time to be read by others. For this reason the commentaries provide a unique opportunity to examine Swift's intellect and rhetorical method when he wrote without hindrance, pressure, or fear. Too, the marginalia came toward the close of his career, when his judgments had been seasoned by his participation over a half-century in the affairs of Church, state, and the intellectual world of Ireland and England.

Although Swift wrote his marginal commentaries solely for his own pleasure, they are not random jottings or idle observations. Even in these informal notes Swift was unconsciously the reformer, the polemicist, and the literary artist. He not only attacked Burnet's work but he often corrected it. He used the skilled polemicist's techniques for his attacks and corrections: he interpreted Burnet's text, he augmented it, and he refuted it. His reforming spirit urged him to make Burnet's work conform to his own standard. Because Swift was also a literary artist, he consciously used the literary artist's methods for demolition and reconstruction: he used both literal interpretation and ironic statements.

Swift's literal statements range in tenor from agreement to denunciation, with intermediate stages between the two polarities. Swift's concurrences with Burnet are infrequent, yet he does agree with Burnet's proposed reforms to strengthen the financial structure of the Church; he substantiates Burnet's belief that Charles II was poisoned; he supports Burnet's claim that when he became a naturalized Dutch citizen, his allegiance was to Holland; he agrees with Burnet's analysis of the problems that would have resulted had a regency been established in the name of James II at the Revolution. Some of Swift's agreements with Burnet are not without reservation; they may even cloak an insult. Swift roguishly agrees with Burnet that the Scots were "knaves and fools" to join Charles I's invasion of England in 1648. When Burnet straightforwardly states that Charles II condemned him as a meddlesome troublemaker Swift smugly assents; Burnet's confession of his betrayal of Lauderdale draws Swift's plaudit, "Right"; Burnet's account of William's refusal to quiet the Irish turbulence in order to compel the Irish to accept him as king coincides with Swift's interpretation of William's motive, but Swift also scores William's wickedness, which Burnet never would have done, although he did admit his shortcomings.

Some of Swift's statements flesh out Burnet's text or alter it slightly. The added information may concern a person or event in Ireland: Charles II's chaplain, whom Burnet calls an "honest blockhead," later became Bishop Woolly of Clonfert; Doctor Walker, a Protestant minister, defended Londonderry against the Papists in the Irish Rebellion of 1689. Swift may bring Burnet's account up to date by comparing the current situation to that which prevailed when Burnet wrote. Some of these comments attack the Hanoverians, whose Low Church Whiggishness Swift resented; others in this category are Swift's attacks on lawyers and court procedures. These additions may seem irrelevant, especially when Swift refers to events that occurred after 1715, the year of Burnet's death, but they are relevant in so far that Burnet instigated the Hanoverian succession and was one of the first who solicited the Electress Sophia's consent for her line to accede to the English throne. Swift wanted to show that the Whiggish Hanoverians, whom Burnet supported, used the same high-handed methods for which Burnet abused the Stuarts. Swift considered this inconsistency as but further proof of Burnet's anti-Stuart bias.

Typical of this type of comment, in which Swift relates a contemporary event to one of Burnet's time, is his observation about Finch, a prosecutor for the Crown in the trials following the Rye House Plot. When Burnet protests the injustice of Finch's prosecution of Algernon Sidney (III, 372), Swift replies that King George later made Finch Earl of Aylsford (281), which conveys Swift's displeasure with the Hanoverian king's promotion of the infamous prosecutor to the peerage. Likewise when Burnet deplores the illegal elections for Parliament at the beginning of James II's reign that filled the seats with members of the king's party (IV, 402), Swift points out that the Whigs used similar measures to pack Parliament at Queen Anne's death (284). Swift parallels James II's prosecution of the participants in Monmouth's Rebellion with those Whigs in George I's reign who revenged themselves on the late queen's defeated Tories. James entrusted the prosecutions to Judge Jeffreys, whose brutality gave the special circuit the name "the Bloody Assize." Burnet writes of Jeffreys' reign of terror: "It gave a general horror to the body of the nation: and it let all people see, what might be expected from a reign that seemed to delight in blood" (IV, 417). "The same here since the Queen's death" (284), observes Swift.

Swift here refers to the events that followed immediately upon the accession of George I, when the exultant Whigs arrested the agents of the defeated Tory government, and the House of Commons impeached Oxford, Bolingbroke, and the Duke of Ormonde. Oxford alone stayed in England to face his long imprisonment and to fight through a protracted trial to his acquittal in 1717. Bolingbroke and Ormonde escaped imprisonment by fleeing to France, where Bolingbroke joined the Old Pretender as his secretary of state and Ormonde headed his army and prepared it to invade England. When the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715 failed and with it the Old Pretender's hopes, the British government treated the rebels leniently. Despite Swift's accusation, there was no "Bloody Assize," such as James had used against Monmouth's rebels. By rigor of the law, all of the many hundreds of participants in the Jacobite uprising were liable to death. Yet none of the rebels taken in Scotland were arrested; of the hundreds of "undistinguished" persons arrested in England, only twenty-six were hanged; the others were either released or transported to the American colonies. Of the six convicted rebel lords, three were sentenced to execution. Despite Bolingbroke's treason, the British government pardoned him and in 1725 allowed him to return to England, where he soon became the leader of the opposition to

Walpole's ministry and wrote his political-philosophical treatise, The Idea of a Patriot King.[1]

The Whigs not only arrested the late queen's ministers, but even regarded any communication between persons associated with the late ministry as treasonous. After the impeachment of Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Ormonde in June 1715, the authorities in Dublin seized two letters addressed to Swift, one from Ormonde, the other from John Barber. The Whigs considered such correspondence as presumptive evidence of a plot to bring in the Pretender.[2] Swift himself was not arrested, but in his letter to Pope, written January 10, 1721, seven years after the Tory debacle, he described his fears for his personal safety, should he have dared, even at so late a date, to publish his sentiments regarding his public career during the queen's reign: "For however orthodox they may be while I am now writing, they may become criminal enough to bring me into trouble before midsummer . . . ." Swift commented bitterly on Oxford's fate: "So in a plot-discovering age, I have known an innocent man seized and imprisoned, and forced to lie several months in chains, while the Ministers were not at leisure to hear his petition, till they had prosecuted and hanged the number they proposed."[3]

---

[1] I. S. Leadam, The History of England from the Accession of Anne to the Death of George II, 1702-1760, Vol. IX: The Political History of England, ed. William Hunt and Reginald L. Poole, 265-266; Goldwin Smith, A History of England (New York, 1957), pp. 417, 430.

[2] Quintana, Mind and Art, p. 231.

In the marginalia Swift points to still another similarity between James II's practices and those of the Hanoverians, when Burnet recounts James's placement of Roman Catholics in posts at Cambridge and Oxford Universities (IV, 443). SWIFT: "Yet in King George's reign, Oxford was bridled and insulted with troops, for no manner of cause but their steadiness to the Church" (286). Swift here refers to the riots of the summer of 1715, when the Jacobites were riding a crest of popularity. At Oxford the clergy joined the populace in protesting George I's exclusion of Tories from office and the impeachment of the late queen's ministers. When the mob pulled down the Dissenters' meeting-places, the government suppressed the riots by reviving an act of 1553 that made the wrecking of houses of worship a capital offense.[4]

In another place Swift inserts his opinion that Parliamentary elections were too infrequent. Burnet observes: "It was said, that a Parliament of a long continuance would be either an engine to sell the liberties of their country, or would, by rendering themselves popular, join with the people against the Crown. In either case it was likely to be destructive to the constitution" (III, 258). Swift contrasts the situation which prevailed under the Triennial Act a half century earlier with that of his own day: "Tempora mutantur; for nothing now will do but septennial Parliaments" (277). Because England was restive under the new Hanoverian regime and riots against the king and his German loyalties were frequent, the Whigs feared to hold a general election. In 1716 Parliament passed a Septennial Act to replace the Triennial Act, which remained in force for two centuries. In this way the Whigs established their power so firmly that the Tories and the High Church could not dislodge them from their entrenched position.[5]

---

[3] Correspondence, II, 373-374.

[4] Leadam, p. 238.

Swift was a staunch advocate of annual elections for Parliament. In the previously quoted letter to Pope, he also wrote: "As to Parliments [sic], I adored the wisdom of that Gothic Institution, which made them Annual: and I was confident our Liberty could never be placed upon a firm foundation till that ancient law were restored among us. For, who sees not, that while such assemblies are permitted to have a longer duration, there grows up a commerce of corruption between the Ministry and the Deputies, wherein they both find their accounts to the manifest danger of Liberty, which traffick would neither answer the design nor expence, if Parliaments met once a year."[6]

Among other of Swift's marginalia for literal interpretation are barbs darted at lawyers, judges, and court procedures. Burnet writes of the

---

[5] G. Smith, p. 422.

[6] Correspondence, II, 372.

House of Commons' impeachment of Lord Danby for treason in 1678: Maynard, "an ancient and eminent lawyer," argued that Parliament had the power, by a statute of Edward III, to declare what they thought was treason (III, 292). SWIFT: "Yes, by a new act, but not with a retrospect; therefore Maynard was a knave and a fool, with all his law" (278). Likewise, Swift slaps a lawyer who argued for the exclusion of the Catholic Duke of York from the throne (III, 327): "A lawyer's way of arguing, very weak" (279). Swift earlier had expressed his contempt for lawyers in the fourth book of *Gulliver's Travels*, when Gulliver described lawyers to the Houyhnhnm Master as men who were "bred up from their Youth in the Art of proving . . . that *White* is *Black* and *Black* is *White*, according as they are paid."[7] Gulliver abused lawyers' defense of falsehood, their readiness to accept bribes to betray their clients, their reliance upon unsound precedent, and their use of cant and jargon to obfuscate the truth. Gulliver concluded his denunciation: " . . . I assured his Honour [the Houyhnhnm Master], that in all Points out of their own Trade, they [lawyers] were usually the most ignorant and stupid Generation among us, the most despicable in common Conversation, avowed enemies to all Knowledge and Learning; and equally disposed to pervert the general Reason of Mankind, in every other Subject of Discourse, as in that of their own Profession."[8]

---

[7] *Prose Writings*, XI, 248.

[8] *Ibid.*, 248-250.

When Burnet turns to judges and juries, Swift once more compares Burnet's time with his own era, in order to reiterate his contention that the Whiggish Hanoverians were as unobserving of the law and as contemptuous of justice as were Burnet's whipping-boys, the Stuarts. When Burnet deplores the packed juries and the directed verdicts of Charles II's reign (III, 352), Swift observes: "So they are now" (280), drawing on his own bitter experience with Irish courts. When Swift's anonymous pamphlet _A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture_ appeared in 1720, the printer was arrested and tried before a jury that acquitted him. Chief Justice Whitshed refused to accept the decision and sent back the jury nine times, until they at last brought in a verdict that left the matter to the judge. Eventually the lord-lieutenant granted a _nolle prosequi._ Swift described Whitshed's browbeating the jury and the final disposition of the case in the letter to Pope already cited.[9] Three years later, in November 1724, when Harding, the printer of the _Drapier's Letters_, was arrested, Swift wrote his _Seasonable Advice_ and addressed it to the grand jury who would hear Harding's case. Although the Crown dropped the prosecution, Chief Justice Whitshed pressured the grand jury to make a presentment of the _Seasonable Advice_. When the grand jury resisted Whitshed's order, he dismissed it and called a new jury. Upon Swift's learning that some of the members of the first body had been ready to submit to Whitshed's demand, he wrote two satiric poems that censured Whitshed's bullying and intimidating the jurors.[10]

---

[9] _Correspondence_, II, 367-368.

Swift's loathing of lawyers and the judiciary is summed up in Gulliver's letter to his cousin Sympson, prefaced to Faulkner's 1735 edition of _Gulliver's Travels_. Gulliver, in the _persona_ of the naive idealist, lamented that his book had failed to produce any beneficial effect on the world of Yahoos, who continued to practice their ~~same~~ follies, vices, and abuses: "Behold, after above six Months Warning, I cannot learn that my Book hath produced one single Effect according to mine Intentions: I desired you would let me know by a Letter, when Party and Faction were extinguished; Judges learned and upright; Pleaders honest and modest, with some Tincture of common Sense; and _Smithfield_ blazing with Pyramids of Law-Books . . . ."[11]

One of Swift's favorite additions to Burnet's text is information that Burnet suppresses for its "indecency." Swift delights in unmasking what he considers is Burnet's spurious morality, in order to reveal the "extraordinary instances" of Vane's composure preceding his execution; he informs us that Cromwell had "gallantries" with the Countess of Dysart; when Burnet apologizes for mentioning Mitchell's "indecent punishment, Swift scorches Burnet for "a thousand other passages . . . as decent";

---

[10] Quintana, _Mind and Art_, pp. 268-269.

[11] _Prose Writings_, XI, 6.

Swift states where Essex's body was found in the Tower; he enlarges upon William's "secret vice."

Swift's corrections of Burnet's text are also to be interpreted literally: Both Charles I and Charles II were under force of their Parliaments, despite Burnet's claim they were not; Clifford, not Shaftesbury, advised Charles II to stop bank payments to ease the Crown's financial plight; Papists suffered as much from Non-Conformist persecution as did Presbyterians; Non-Conformists were more opposed to the Church of England than to the Church of Rome; James did not rescind his order to reinstate the president of Magdalen College when William's first expedition failed to reach England; Burnet's account of the Hamilton-Mohun duel was "wrongly told."

Other of Swift's literal comments are his corrections of Burnet's grammar and usage and his complaints of Burnet's weak reasoning and faulty argumentation. Burnet's reasons for the failure of Commonwealth, his argument against the annulment of the Scottish Commonwealth Parliaments, his exposition of DeWitt's position regarding the Prince of Orange's statholdership, his statement of the king's justification of the execution of Armstrong, his explanation of James II's assumption of the dispensing power, his interpretation of the king's abdication--all these displease Swift, and he corrects them.

Swift's denunciations of Burnet range from mild jabs to damaging thrusts. Swift puts aside such gentle rebukes as "Nonsense" or "Foolish" for sterner ones when he attacks Burnet's failure to attribute a single good quality to Charles I, for thinking as Cromwell thought, for showing partiality to Dissenters and Whigs, for abusing the High Church, and for mistreating the Stuarts. Swift inveighs against those who plotted with William to take the throne, among them Burnet; he censures William for declaring he had no designs on the English throne all the while he was plotting to take it.

Swift is most devastating when he strikes Burnet as "a raker into scandal"; when he thunders at Burnet's Covenanting relatives; when he condemns him for vilifying Sir William Temple; for betraying Lauderdale; for being instrumental in Leighton's death; for accusing James of deserting his throne; for attacking the truth of his pamphlet, The Conduct of the Allies; for implying that Queen Anne favored the Pretender; for telling the queen that the Tory peace would destroy England; for abusing Ormonde. These are the most angry and emotional of Swift's literal assertions.

But the more effective literary technique for assailing and correcting, far more effective than literal statement, is irony. Irony is the natural tool of the reformer and satirist, and Swift wields it superbly to demolish Burnet's statement so that the reader must rebuild it to conform to Swift's way of thinking. His irony strikes at the very heart of Burnet's work; he directs it against what he abominates in Burnet's History: his diction and style, his historical judgment, his egotism, his pettiness, his stupidity, his false refinement, his dishonesty, his hypocrisy, his prurience, and his treachery. An analysis of the quality of Swift's irony reveals a multiplicity of facets and levels of meaning.

Simplest to interpret are the ironic statements Swift intends to mean the contrary of their stated meaning. Many of these are comments on diction and style. "Dignified," "eloquent," and "true sublime" are to be interpreted as "vulgar," "graceless," and "base." Also in the category of implicit meaning the reverse of explicit statement are such comments as Swift's "Admirable authority" to Burnet's third-hand information, "He told it to a person, from whom Tillotson had it, who told it to me," and Swift's "Witty" and "Witty the second time" to Burnet's "Dangerfield, . . . a false coiner, undertook now to coin a plot," and to Burnet's gallows humor in his reference to the method of screw torture that "screwed out" information from those accused of treason. Swift believed Burnet incapable of being witty, and his attempts feeble, heavy-handed, or tasteless. Although Swift objects to Burnet's attempted levity in his treatment of a grim subject, he is more crude on the execution of Burnet's maternal uncle, Lord Warriston. Swift remarks: "Was he hanged or beheaded? A fit uncle for such a Bishop."

Swift's ironic darts prick Burnet's conceit. He commends Burnet's "modesty" when he flaunts his appointment to the University of Glasgow, his success as a London preacher, and his composure in Holland where he sought asylum from the king's wrath; he notes "Perspicuity" on Burnet's bungled construction that loses the reader in a tangle of pronouns.

Swift uses irony for contemptuous mockery in sarcastic epithets, such as "Sad trash," "Villain," "Rogue," and "Dog"; he mocks with hyperbolic witticisms: "A Scottish project: instead of feeding fifty, you starve one hundred." He sneers at Burnet's language as "Scotch"; he gibes at his fumbling for words; he teases Burnet that the Earl of Rochester's "very good pen" was perhaps "of gold or silver"; he pretends to clarify one of Burnet's botched constructions, only to render it even more absurd.

Swift uses irony for more serious purposes than merely to condemn Burnet for atrocities of language and style, for a lack of historical judgment and objectivity, for egotism, and for partiality; he attempts to demolish Burnet's character and to reconstruct a totally different one. He first chooses Burnet's image of the wise, intelligent prelate and strives to rebuild an image of a fatuous, stupid man, incapable of holding a position of trust. He ridicules Burnet's pretense of modesty, which allows him to hint at sexual deviation, but not to mention its nature. He clears up the mystery about Titus Oates and the Bishop of Chester, and at the same time chastises Burnet for his affected delicacy; he points to the inanity of Burnet's comment that the soldiers in King James's standing army were "bad Englishmen and worse Christians"; he strikes Burnet for his sin of pride in assuming God was on William's side. After Burnet admitted the presumptive proofs of the birth of the Prince of Wales were "more convincing than plain and downright evidence," Swift's "Well said, Bishop" is ironic, because Swift is not complimenting Burnet, but calling attention to Burnet's stupidity for ever having believed the fictitious accounts. Last of all, when Burnet reports William's agreement that the throne should pass to Anne and her heirs, rather than to any offspring he might have by a wife other than Mary, Swift's ironic "A great concession truly" makes Burnet a simpleton for pawning off such foolishness on the reader.

Swift further uses irony to attempt to destroy Burnet's image of uprightness, decency, and morality; in its place he creates an image of a liar and a person of unsound moral judgment and practice. When Burnet states that James had not "struck at the whole" when he appointed Catholics to the posts at Magdalen College, Swift's retort is heavy with irony: "He was a better Tory than I, if he spoke as he thought." Swift is convinced Burnet is lying, possibly to persuade the reader that his tolerance prevented his condemning the new king too hastily. Swift again believes Burnet is lying or repeating a lie when he reports that James's queen, with the infant prince, fled to France at the time of the Revolution, and that the midwife and those who assisted at the birth were also taken away or disposed of, so that it might never be learned what became of them. Swift's reply, "That is strange and incredible," is not acquiescence, but rather his ironical way of asserting the story is a fabrication.

Swift further hacks at Burnet's image of probity when he retorts to Burnet's praise of his Covenanting cousin's truthfulness: "The author and his cousins could *not tell lies*, but they *could plot*." Here Swift would seem to use the ironical method of agreement, followed by a sudden reversal of position. Actually, however, Swift's agreement is ironic: he means that Burnet and his cousins did both lie and plot. Swift further undermines Burnet's character by pointing to his gaming language: "run of success," "above board," and "tables were turned." Swift's comments here are straightforward, but the irony lies in the incongruity of these metaphors in a bishop's vocabulary. Swift harps on Burnet's repeated use of "decent" and "indecent," attempting to create an image of Burnet that lacks concern for decency.

Likewise Swift uses irony to imply that Burnet winked at sexual promiscuity. When Swift asks Burnet with what decencies a mistress should be treated, and if one of Charles II's concubines, whom Burnet attended in her last days, was handsome, he employs the ironic method of feigning a detached innocence to shock the reader and provoke his indignation. When Burnet describes the Duke of Buckingham's stratagem to replace the Duchess of Cleveland in the king's favor, Swift is quite aware that this is but another of Burnet's ludicrously awkward constructions, yet he uses it to full advantage to hint slyly that Burnet condoned adultery, or at least showed meticulous concern for detail in reporting the king's illicit loves. Swift creates situational irony by drawing attention to the inappropriateness of an Anglican bishop's concern for such information.

Last, Swift employs irony to destroy Burnet's image as a Churchman by citing his slurs and denigrations of Episcopacy and his tenderness to Dissenters. He reconstructs his image as a treacherous, jesuitical cleric. Swift allows no deviation from the tenets of High Anglicanism, nor any compromise of its rigid principles, nor any attitude that brooked toleration of Dissent. When Burnet received his appointment to the University of Glasgow, both Presbyterians and Episcopalians complained, but the Episcopalians were the more vehement, since, Burnet explains, "they thought I intended to make myself popular at their cost: so they began that strain of fury and calumny that has pursued me ever since from that sort of people [Swift's italics]" (II, 194). SWIFT: "A civil term for all who are episcopal" (274). Swift snaps back at Burnet for commending Sir Harbottle Grimstone's and Lord Russell's tolerance of Non-Conformity and for recalling that Archbishop Leighton deplored the corruption in the administration of the Church of England. Swift is nettled that an Anglican bishop would strike the foundations of the Church he was consecrated to serve. Swift retaliates with his heaviest irony when Burnet recounts that he refused to divulge to the king's cabinet council the content of Lord Russell's confession, and would only swear that his scaffold speech had been "penned by himself, and not by me" (III, 366). Swift replies, "Jesuitical" (281), as he does again when Burnet explains his means of avoiding involvement in the Non-Conformists' treasons during the Duke of York's persecutions (III, 379; 282). Swift is certain Burnet was implicated in the Non-Conformists' plots to overthrow the government and the Church and that he used a wily trickster's schemes to conceal his treachery.

The irony in Swift's marginalia exists on three levels of interpretation:

the level of implied meaning the reverse of expressed meaning, the level of mockery, and the level of situational irony. The first is readily grasped; the reader responds quickly to the turnabout adjustment; the second level also lends itself to easy recognition and interpretation, because the reader falls in effortlessly with Swift's hyperbolical distortions and exaggerations; the third level, the irony Swift creates by staging a situation conducive to it, is more subtle to grasp, since it is not present in the statement, but in the incongruity of the statement and its environment. Swift's comments on Burnet's gaming metaphors are straightforward, but they are ironic in their context, a gamester's jargon in a cleric's vocabulary. Likewise situational is the irony created by Swift's citing Burnet's numerous recitations of Charles II's adultery and Burnet's apparent acceptance of them. Again the irony is not in Swift's comment, but in the incongruity of the bishop's attitude.

Swift's irony is a far more effective literary method than is a literal statement. He uses it to attempt to demolish Burnet's honorable image and replace it with a new composite of fool, liar, hypocrite, and crafty schemer. Yet, resulting from these ironies is one supreme irony: Burnet's prime literary effort itself furnishes the material for his indictment.

The value of Swift's marginalia is not in their assault upon Burnet's character or his History, but rather in their insight into Swift's historical positions, the nature of his prejudices, and the method of his irony. Swift's religious and political disposition prevented a fair assessment of Burnet's broadly tolerant views. If we discount the fanatical anti-Catholicism and Whig partisanship of Burnet's last years, that caused him to assert the Non-Conformist sects the only true Protestants and the Established Church the agent of the Church of Rome, then Burnet was a middle-of-the-roader whose willingness to compromise caused Swift to mistrust both his religion and politics. Swift resented Burnet's reforming zeal: he resisted Burnet's proposed liturgical changes; he bristled at Burnet's impugning the conduct of the Anglican clergy. These Swift regarded as but abuse of Episcopacy. Swift's unswerving High Church adherence could not tolerate Burnet's comprehension plan for broadening the base of Episcopacy; nor could Swift's combined Irish Whiggism and English Toryism abide Burnet's Low Church Whiggism, even though it was the temper that made the Revolution possible and saved the Protestant succession.

Swift accused Burnet of lacking historical judgment and objectivity, but it is Swift's lack of these very qualities that blinded him to Burnet's achievements and prevented his crediting Burnet for saving the Protestant succession, by persuading Mary to yield the authority of rule to her husband and by preventing the Whigs from making William the sole ruler. Nor would Swift recognize Burnet's further efforts to make a Dutch Calvinist palatable to the English nation; nor would he assert Burnet's role in preserving the Established Church in the Revolutionary Settlement, while, at the same time, granting tolerance to Dissent. Swift was more irritated than grateful for Burnet's instigation of the Hanoverian succession that secured for England a Protestant line of kings; he ignored Burnet's persuasion of the Crown to remit the first fruits and tenths to the Church, although Swift labored to secure a similar stipend for the Church of Ireland; Swift failed to credit Burnet as a chronicler of the history of the Scottish and English Restoration and of the Revolution, from the vantage point of a participant in the events of those years.

The clash of High Church Tory with Low Church Whig produced a commentary that illuminates Swift's own religious and political beliefs and created the climate in which a master ironist works best.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baugh, Albert C. *A History of the English Language*. 2d ed. New York, 1963.

__________. *A Literary History of England*. New York, 1948.

Burnet, Gilbert (Bishop). *History of His Own Time*. From the Restoration of King Charles the Second to the Treaty of Peace at Utrecht, in the Reign of Queen Anne. London, 1850.

Clark, G. N. *The Later Stuarts, 1660-1714*. Vol. X of *The Oxford History of England*. Edited by Sir George Clark. Oxford, 1949.

Clarke, T. E. S. and Foxcroft, H. C. *A Life of Gilbert Burnet*. Cambridge, 1907.

Dictionary of National Biography. Oxford, 1882. Reprinted 1949-1950.

Ehrenpreis, Irvin. *Swift. The Man, His Works, and the Age.* 3 vols. Cambridge, Mass., 1962- (________).

__________. "Swift's History of England," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, LI (April 1952), 177-185.

Encyclopedia Britannica. 14th ed.

Foxcroft, H. C. (ed.) *A Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time.* Oxford, 1902.

Leadam, I. S. *The History of England from the Accession of Anne to the Death of William III, 1660-1702.* Vol. IX of *The Political History of England*. Edited by William Hunt and Reginald L. Poole. London, 1912.

Lodge, Richard. *The History of England from the Restoration to the Death of William III, 1660-1702.* Vol. VIII of *The Political History of England*. Edited by William Hunt and Reginald L. Poole. London, 1912.

Orwell, George. *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays.* New York, 1945.

Oxford English Dictionary. 1933 ed. Reprinted 1961.

Quintana, Ricardo. *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift.* Oxford, 1936.

__________. *Swift: An Introduction.* London, 1955.

Ranke, Leopold von. *A History of England*. Translated from the German. 6 vols. Oxford, 1875.

Robertson, Stuart and Cassidy, Frederic G. *The Development of Modern English.* 2d ed. Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1954.

Smith, Goldwin. *A History of England*. 2d ed. New York, 1957.

Stanhope, Earl. *History of England, 1701-1713*. 2 vols. 5th ed. London, 1889.

Steensma, Robert C. "The Influence of Sir William Temple on Jonathan Swift: Some Conclusions," *Proceedings of Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters,* XLI, Part II (1964), 195-201.

__________. "Swift's Model for Lord Munodi," *Notes and Queries*, XII, *N.S.* (June 1965), 216-217.

Swift, *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift.* 5 vols. Edited by Sir Harold Williams. Oxford, 1963-1965.

__________. *Journal to Stella*. 2 vols. Edited by Sir Harold Williams. Oxford, 1948.

__________. *The Poems of Jonathan Swift.* Edited by Sir Harold Williams. 3 vols. Oxford, 1958.

__________. *The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift*. Edited by Herbert Davis. 14 vols. Oxford, 1939- (______)

Talbot, Charles. *Correspondence of Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury*. Edited by William Coxe. London, 1821.

Trevelyan, George Macaulay. *England under Queen Anne*. Vol. III: *The Peace and the Protestant Succession.* London, 1934.

Voigt, Milton. Swift and the Twentieth Century. Detroit, 1964.

Williams, Kathleen. Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise. Lawrence, Kansas, 1958.

VITA

Name	Emily H. Patterson
Birthplace	Sherwood, Ohio
Birthdate	May 24, 1920
Degrees	B. S., *magna cum laude*, Bowling Green State University, 1945
	M.A., University of Utah, 1962. Major, English; minor, history. Thesis: "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and His Circle: the Interaction of Rossetti and His Literary Contemporaries." Thesis passed with distinction.
	Ph. D., University of Utah, 1967. Major, English; minor, linguistics. Dissertation: "Antithetic Anglicans: Swift and Bishop Burnet."
Honorary Societies and Scholarships	Phi Kappa Phi; Graduate Research Fellow, University of Utah, 1963-1964.
Professional Organizations	Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association; Modern Language Association of America
Professional Positions	Teacher, Public Schools, Sandusky, Ohio, 1940-1945; Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of English, University of Utah, 1964-1967

DOCTORAL FUTURE RESEARCH PROPOSALS

by

Emily H. Patterson

A program of future research submitted to the faculty of
the University of Utah, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English

University of Utah

June 9, 1967

FUTURE RESEARCH PROPOSALS

1. An examination of Swift's marginalia in the Earl of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion in an effort to define Swift's historical position, his prejudice, and his literary method, especially the quality of his irony.

2. An examination of Swift and Charles Ford's friendship during the period of Ford's editorship of The London Gazette, July 1, 1712, to August 1, 1714, when Swift, a key figure in the Queen's Tory ministry, depended on Ford for political information.

3. An examination of Swift's collaboration with Thomas Sheridan in writing The Intelligencer, a weekly essay periodical that ran for twenty issues in 1728.

4. An examination of Swift's relationship with Archbishop William King of Dublin, at times Swift's ally and staunch supporter, again his bitter enemy.